

Biogr.
740 lu

Martin, John

SOME
A C C O U N T
OF THE
L I F E
AND
W R I T I N G S

OF THE
REV. JOHN MARTIN,

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH, MEETING IN
STORE STREET, BEDFORD SQUARE.

Yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities. For
though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool;
for I will say the TRUTH. 2 Cor. xii. 5, 6.

LONDON.

Printed for J. STOCKDALE, Piccadilly, opposite Burlington-
House; and for J. MARTIN, Junior, Bookseller, No. 27,
Great Russel-Street, Bloomsbury.

(PRICE ONE SHILLING AND SIX-PENCE.)

1797.

330. 6.

A CONCISE
ACCOUNT
OF THE
LIFE
AND
WRITINGS

BIBLIOTHECA
REGIA
MONACENSIS.

Bayrische
Staatsbibliothek
München

LONDON.

Printed for J. Stoenhale, Piccadilly, opposite Burlington
House; and for J. Martin, Junior, Bookbinder, No. 27,
Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury.

(PRICE ONE SHILLING AND SIX PENCE.)

SOME
ACCOUNT, &c.

LETTER I.

SIR,

WHEN I first thought of drawing up a narrative of my own life, it was in consequence of such reflections as these: that I had often been instructed by those who had left behind them memoirs of this kind written by themselves; that it had given me pain to read the lives of some worthy men, published by persons unable, or unwilling to do them justice; that I should not choose to fall into such hands; that by drawing up a plain account of my own life, I

might

might avoid it; and by so doing, not only oblige some of my friends, but become better acquainted with myself; and of course, with many of my mercies and infirmities.

While I thought of these things, several remarks of Doctor Johnson's encouraged me to proceed. You shall have them in his own words.

“ There has perhaps, rarely passed a life, of
“ which a judicious and faithful narrative would
“ not be useful. For not only every man has,
“ in the mighty mass of this world, great numbers
“ in the same condition with himself, to
“ whom his mistakes and miscarriages, escapes
“ and expedients, would be of immediate and
“ apparent use; but there is such an uniformity
“ in the state of man, considered apart from
“ adventitious and separable decorations and disguises,
“ that there is scarce any possibility of
“ good or ill, but is common to human kind.”

In another place, Doctor Johnson says,

“ The writer of his own life has at least the
“ first qualification of an historian, the know-
“ ledge

“ ledge of the truth ; and though it may be
“ plausibly objected, that his temptations to dis-
“ guise it, are equal to his opportunities of
“ knowing it, yet it cannot but be thought, that
“ impartiality may be expected with equal con-
“ fidence from him that relates the passages of
“ his own life, as from him that delivers the
“ transactions of another. What is collected by
“ conjecture (and by conjecture only can one
“ judge of anothers motives or sentiments,) is
“ easily modified by fancy or desire ; as objects
“ imperfectly discerned take forms from the
“ hope, or fear of the beholder. But that which
“ is fully known cannot be falsified, but with
“ reluctance of understanding, and alarm of
“ conscience ;—of understanding the lover of
“ truth ;—of conscience the sentinel of virtue.”

I perused Sir, not only these just remarks more than once, but also the following, which are ascribed to the same author : “ I do not
“ think the life of any literary man in England
“ well written.—Beside the common incidents
“ of life, it should tell us his studies, his mode
“ of living—the means by which he attained to
“ excellence, and his opinion of his own
works.” All these extracts may be found in th

seventh edition of the Beauties of Doctor Samuel Johnson, published by Kearsley, Fleet-Street, 1787.

Though I have not attained that excellence which Doctor Johnson then admired, yet Sir, I considered my own opinion of my own writings, of some consequence to my readers; because I have those confessions to make, and that judgment to pass on some things which I have written, which should not be withheld from them; and that cannot, with propriety, be transferred to any other person.

Could I have given a correct and uniform edition of the papers I have published, and now wish to preserve, altered and abridged to my own satisfaction, that would have pleased me much better than the present task; but Sir, I have little, if any hope, of printing such an edition of my works; I am therefore, compelled to dismiss that subject from my mind, and to content myself with what I have just now proposed.

Having so far settled my plan, the next thing to be considered was, in what manner I should
execute

execute my intention: and after many thoughts on that circumstance, I preferred a kind of epistolary conversation with some friend to every other mode of composition. So that, the only thing in which I was undetermined was to whom my letters should be directed; and for the reasons I am going to state, my choice settled upon you.

My friend Mr. * * *, said I, is a man nearly of my own religious, and political sentiments. He fears God, and lives in bondage to no man. He is well acquainted with the human heart, and with the way of salvation. Though I have seen him but once, I have often heard of his family, and am highly entertained with his letters; which are pious, polite, and full of humanity. Besides, though he has not read any thing that I have written, he has requested me to send him a catalogue of my publications, and with it to give him the outlines of my life. I will venture therefore to write to him.

Permit me, Sir, to add, that I willingly turned my attention to some of the disparities between you and me. You have had a liberal education. I have not. You had early, the best examples to follow, and the best advice in your private studies

studies. I have wanted that assistance. Your temporal circumstances have always been easy. Mine have been precarious. You are yet in the vigour of life. I am on the decline. When you became a minister your very name produced respect; when I began to preach my name was unknown. But Sir, from these disparities in our present condition, I flatter myself, we shall each of us more admire the goodness of God in our own appointed lots, than if they had been in all respects, exactly the same.

As there are many excellent persons in the country, little known in London, should these letters ever be made public, perhaps, I shall be told, that I have written them to an imaginary person, and not to a living character. But such suspicions, Sir, would no more affect me than yourself. For it must be admitted, that every good man would wish for such a friend as I have described; and barren as the world is of genuine friendship, you will not be offended if I say, that in it, I have found more of that description than one.

Here

Here, Sir, I close my present letter; and provided I obtain your permission, I intend to go forward with the narrative of my life, just as opportunity and inclination to proceed may admit.

I am Sir,

Your's &c.

LETTER II.

1741. 1754.

SIR,

AS most of my letters to you, will be nearly of the same length, it may be sufficient to put at the head of each letter, the term of time included in it. The period contained in this letter, is from my birth, nearly to the fourteenth year of my age.

I was born at Spalding in Lincolnshire, on Sunday evening, March 15th, 1741. My father was the son of a reputable farmer and grazier at

Loudham

Loudham in Nottinghamshire. My mother, whose maiden name was King, was born of poorer parents, at Barnwick, near Stamford. They were married at Spalding, in the year 1739, when my father was upwards of forty years of age, and my mother was more than thirty.

I was their first born son, and was sent very early to school. One of my tutors at Spalding, was Mr. Aquila Robinson. His attempts to improve my understanding were honest and kind; and he lived to perceive, that the care he had bestowed upon me was not in vain. Of him, and of old Mr. Stagg, who taught me my letters, I often think with pleasure. Instruction, Sir, is the natural source of knowledge, and as few parents in the lower ranks of life, have ability and leisure to educate their own children, a tribute of respect is surely due to those teachers who have, for a slender reward, granted to such children their best assistance.

In the year 1752, I was sent to a reputable boarding school at Gosbertown, a village about six miles from Spalding. The master of this school was Mr. Anthony Birks, the author of a useful Treatise of Arithmetical Collections and Improvements.

provements. But Mr. Thomas Allen, one of his ushers; wrote the learned Appendix published with that Treatise. Had I staid a year or two longer at that school, I might have gleaned up a few sheaves of useful knowledge; but a foolish fondness for my father's house, made me impatient of proper restraint, and anxious to enjoy that sort of liberty which unruly children, and childish men, naturally admire.

On my return to Spalding, I again sat at the feet of my old master, Mr. Aquila Robinson; from whose tuition I was in no haste to remove. But my parents began to think it proper to turn my attention to some trade, and accordingly, sought out for me a different kind of master. Here, Sir, before I leave Spalding, it may be proper to take some notice of the state of my mind, during the first fourteen years of my life, and of some circumstances and events, within that period; because this will bring forward the remaining part of my narrative with a better chance of its being understood.

While I was a child, in my external behaviour, I was active, sprightly, and vain; and, by the natural bent of my temper, inquisitive, and strongly

ly inclined to find out the reason of things. But I had very early, deep notions of my own internal depravity; and from what I have since observed, I now think, that every child is a law to himself, before he is acquainted with any written rule of action. I know at least, that from what I had seen in some, heard from others, and observed in myself, I formed a judgment of what was right and wrong, before I was acquainted with any written law; which judgment, as I regarded, or disregarded it, always gave me pleasure or pain; and this Sir, in my opinion, is the first, and universal law of human life; and I believe, whether our faculties are afterwards, greater or less, no man can ever, intentionally, violate that law, without being accused and condemned for it in the court of his own conscience.

This moral law I daily transgressed; and my knowledge of that fact, brought me into bondage. What I suffered on this account, and from my ill state of health, led me to suppose, that I was more polluted than other children; nor could I always think well of my parents, who had, as I imagined, brought a poor child into this world, born to be unholy and unhappy.

But,

But, strange as it may appear, while thus abased in my own eyes, I could not admit, that my outward behaviour was deserving of much rebuke; nay, when reproved for faults too evident to be denied, instead of taking in good part the gentlest admonitions, I resented reproof, and thought myself insulted by such parental discipline. Will any one say, I learned these airs from other children? of whom did they learn them? You know Sir, that when we ascend as high as possible in this inquiry, we must come at last to a man whom God made upright, and be obliged to confess, that by his disobedience many were made sinners; so that death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression.

It is generally admitted, that in every age and nation new crimes have been invented and applauded. But the inventors of evil things did not sin by the force of example; no Sir, like most of the kings of Israel, they did worse than all that were before them; not only by their own peculiar crimes, but by seducing others to patronize their inventions, and enticing them to invent new ways of still augmenting the enormous heap of human transgressions. Thus the mount of corruption

has

has been increased in this world, is yet increasing, and of its increase there seems to be no end.

One thing, while yet a child, I cannot forget. I mean the pleasure I then had in being quite alone, especially in bed, on purpose to indulge a thousand foolish imaginations. In this situation to buy, sell, get gain; to build, plant, travel; to assume what character I pleased, and as I grew up, to act the part of Romeo, Hamlet, King Lear, George Barnwell, or some other theatrical exhibition; to dispute with my equals, and to debate like Nestor and Ulysses, before my superiors; to chastise Thersites, and send him howling to the fleet, and then to be applauded by Agamemnon in the camp; these ambitious whims, and many worse than these, were my delight. How wonderful, said I, is the secret power of the human mind! How amazing the range of human thought! Have all boys this ability in the same degree? If they have, they possess those pleasures of which they cannot be deprived.

By often indulging such reveries, I discovered somewhat of the grandeur of the human mind; but its extravagance and folly escaped my notice. For I seldom considered what vain illusions

sions occupied my thoughts, nor what influence this mental influenza had, and was like to have on my temper and conversation; nor did I seriously consider, that all my imaginations were naked and open before him, from whom nothing can be concealed. It would give me pleasure could I add, that I have long since obtained a complete dominion over all these follies; but, Sir, vain thoughts have so very often been indulged by me, that when I am most vexed with them, and resolved to drive them out, they will not utterly depart.

Before I was fourteen, I was twice in great danger of being drowned, and once, (when afflicted with the small pox,) much alarmed by an earthquake. By these things, especially the last, thoughts of a future state, accompanied with many fears about it, made me uneasy. As my inquietude increased, my prayers were multiplied, and my resolutions to reform my conduct, were, as I then thought, very sincere.

While I kept my purpose to reform, a secret, I had only to endure self reproach when it was forgotten, or laid aside; but not suspecting, either the sincerity of my intentions, or my want of pow-

er to perform them, sometimes I previously published what I resolved to effect, and by so doing, brought upon myself those sarcasms I was ill able to bear. The consequence was, that after I had met with several mortifications of this kind, I was willing to leave Spalding, and to accept of that master which my parents had provided for me elsewhere.

I am Sir,

Yours, &c,

L E T T E R III.

1754. 1756.

S I R,

THE name of my new master was Newark. He was a very enterprizing gentleman. At Stamford, he was a confectioner, china and glass-man, mustard-maker, brick-maker, malster, a considerable dealer in tiles, slates, freestone, and I know not what besides. But at Spalding,

Mr.

Mr. Newark was a corn merchant, and traded in a vessel of his own, from that part of Lincolnshire to London.

The character of this gentleman was set before me in shining colors, and it was said, that if I took care to please him, it would be much to my advantage. Of all this, I thought but little; because I had no taste for trade, nor any thirst for the gains of commerce. But as Stamford was twenty miles from Spalding, and said to be a fine town, I was willing to see it, and to live there, because there I hoped to avoid those censures which I could not escape at home; and still confiding in my own strength, I concluded, that as I went an entire stranger to Stamford, I should be sufficiently careful of my future reputation. But, this pleasing dream was soon dissolved; for carrying with me my former propensities to Stamford, I soon found opportunities to indulge them; my indiscretions and faults were not long concealed, and they who had greater, exposed my folly, and gloried in being witnesses of my disgrace.

Mr. Newark however, continued to treat me kindly, and endeavoured to make me easy in his

service; but I could not bear to stand behind a counter. I knew indeed, that many of my superiors in fortune and talents, were fond of such a situation; but I found then, and often since, that examples are of no force where they are not approved.

In this uneasy position, plotting and contriving different arguments to gain my release, I unexpectedly heard, that my mother was very ill, and that her life was in danger. By Mr. Newark's permission, I hastened to see her, and found her in bed, languishing under the incessant flames of a bad fever, yet quite sensible, and glad to see her favourite son. She looked wishfully at me, gave me her hand, asked me several questions, and bestowed upon me her blessing, and her best advices. Soon after this afflicting interview, she grew worse and died.

If Sir, you had a mother in whom you delighted, you will allow me to be a little partial to the memory of mine. Her appearance, address, and natural elocution, were highly engaging. She knew how to speak with propriety, and to command the attention of those about her, in the most agreeable manner. From her lips, I was first charmed

ed

ed with the pleasing power of graceful pronunciation ; and from her example, I reaped more advantage in the first formation of my own speech than from any other person. She also excelled in reading, and had a taste for good books. With what pleasure have I heard her read some of the Psalms of David ; (especially the 84th and 105th Psalms,) and some other pieces of devotion ! The difference between her reading and common readers, has often led me to suppose, that well written books are like well tuned musical instruments. Touched by a skilful hand, we lend a willing ear to the melodious sound ; but when they are in the hands of the unskilful, our ears are shocked at the discordant noise. So different at least, is the same book, and the same page, when it is read with grace, to what it is when mouthed, or mumbled over by vicious, or by lifeless readers. Just before I had written this account of my mother, another Mary Martin has made her appearance ; for I have now a grand daughter that is so called ; and should I live to see in her the features and the genius of my mother, it would give me great pleasure in my old age.

While I was at Stamford, my mother sent me Hervey's Meditations, and some other pious books, accompanied with such written advice of her own, that would have done me good, had it been regarded. But it was too serious to suit my taste. Her letters I preserved with care; but her good instructions I soon forgot. This, I believe, is a common case; and it shews there may be great strength of affection to the inferior parts of personal character, when the more excellent traits of the same character, are either not perceived, or not esteemed.

My mother died June 1756, and was buried in Spalding church-yard, at the east end of the chancel, in the presence of many mournful spectators. A decent grave stone informs the passenger of her name and age. Nine of her daughters she had buried in the same place; and her tenth, and only surviving daughter, was soon added to the goodly number. Of her three sons then living, William, who was next to me, you will find I buried at Nottingham, in the year 1768: but Thomas, her youngest son, I have not heard of for more than twenty years; so that, in all probability, I am Sir, the only surviving child of the thirteen.

After

After I had attended my mother's funeral, the thought of returning to Stamford distressed my mind. I was therefore very importunate with my father to buy out my time, and pleaded strongly with him to live again at Spalding. He consented; and soon afterwards, for a sufficient premium, Mr. Newark gave up my indentures.

I am always affected, Sir, when I think of the last days of that scheming gentleman. Flushed with some partial successes in trade, he grew weary of his original calling, parted with the business he was best acquainted with, rushed into a multiplicity of rash engagements, failed in his credit, became a bankrupt, was reduced to poverty, tempted to destroy himself, and though prevented, died at last, pitied and bewailed by very few of his acquaintance.

How many enterprising men have I known thus to fail, and to fall into grievous calamities! Yet, Sir, to them that will be rich, ten thousand of such examples are of little service. No, they hear of them without reflection, or only with such reflections as give them an higher opinion of their own imaginary prudence. 5b

prudence. You and I, Sir, are not exposed to these temptations ; but are we not surrounded with greater? May we ever have grace to escape the corruptions which are in the world through lust, and to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might !

I am Sir,

Yours, &c.

LETTER IV.

1756, 1757.

S I R,

THOUGH by removing from Stamford to Spalding, I gained at first, but little advantage, this change gradually brought forward other changes of some importance.

My father was a publican and a grazier. The business of the house was formerly managed by my mother ; and after her decease, it was supposed

I might

I might be of some use to my father in his domestic affairs; but I was not qualified for such services. The company that we entertained, were usually numerous, and always miscellaneous. It gave me some pleasure to listen to their various conversation; but to obey their call, and to receive their reckoning, did not suit my aspiring disposition.

While I was thus employed, what Dean Swift travelled many miles on foot to observe, fell under my notice at home; and I believe, that much more of the undisguised opinions of men was observed by me in that situation, than would have been noticed in a more reputable place. In this noisy school, if I was some times taught improper lessons, I certainly learned somewhat that every scholar does not learn, and such things as have been of use to me in my further acquaintance with mankind. He that does not know men as they really are, will always, however learned, (in what is commonly called learning,) be liable to be laughed at, when he ventures to give his opinion in popular debates.

My favourite amusements when I was fifteen, were plays, assemblies, and cards; but at home, I sometimes

I sometimes amused myself with painting, and at all times by reading such books as I then esteemed. The authors which I admired, were Pomfret and Pope, Swift and Addison, Shakespear and Dryden, Richardson and Gay; but among these Swift, Addison, Pope and Shakespear, were my favourite authors. Young's Night Thoughts, I had not patience to read; though here and there a sentence in that poem, made a considerable impression on my mind: but after all, that work seemed to me strangely rhapsodical, and by no means equal to the better parts of Paradise Lost. Just let me add, that my loosest amusements were seldom polluted with intoxication; but this was not owing to any virtuous disposition in me; for I wished to enjoy my glass as much as I fancied my companions enjoyed it, and was grieved that I could neither relish, nor safely partake of wine, nor of strong drink.

Mr. Thomas Allen, whom I mentioned before, was now at Spalding, and had opened a school in his own name. He invited me to receive some additional lessons from him, whenever I could make it convenient; this favor I thankfully embraced, and by his assistance, made some progress in geometry, and in some other branches of use-
ful

ful learning. But as I had no inclination to succeed my father in his business, I was requested to turn my attention to some other employment. This seemed a reasonable request; and in April 1757, without much reflection on the consequence, I agreed to live with Mr. Wilkinson an attorney at Holbeach.

Mr. Wilkinson had not much business; and I was pleased with this circumstance, because it gave me leisure to pursue that sort of reading and amusement, which gratified my own indolence. Such careless servants are every where to be found. Industry and integrity, in those that are employed by others, are of more worth than men in business always imagine. He that is favoured with such assistance in a servant, should give him more encouragement than is commonly the lot of such servants to receive.

In the summer of this year 1757, I went with Mr. Wilkinson to Skipton in Craven; a market town in the East Riding of Yorkshire. In the former part of this journey, between Lincoln and Bawtry, the day proved extremely wet. The heavy rains compelled us to seek for shelter, in a little village called Clayworth, where we staid all night.

night. Mr. Wilkinson slept that evening at the parsonage house; but I remained at the place where we first alighted. This, Sir, was a night that must not be forgotten.

As the evening came on, I found myself restless and indisposed. The landlady, who was more than sixty years of age, came into the little parlour where I sat alone, and perceiving me somewhat dejected, in an abrupt manner, she said, "Sir, you seem to want company. I'll tell you what. You and my son, shall go to the Methodist Meeting. It will be rare sport for you." Though I was surprized at her odd behaviour, at first, I made her no answer. Looking stedfastly at me, she then said, "The Methodists, Sir, are queen sort of folk, but they won't hurt you."

My curiosity was now excited; and after asking a few questions, I consented to her proposal. Her son, an illiterate weaver, was now called into the parlour, and by him I was conducted to the Methodist Meeting. But I was surprized when we came to it, to find, that it was held in a large room, in a common dwelling house. My guide entered first, and I followed him, into a kind of hall, in which were about twenty or thirty people. As soon as I had

had seated myself amongst them, a grave looking man entered the room, and stood nearly opposite to me, behind the back of an old chair, and in this strange situation, for so it seemed to me, after singing and prayer, he took the following words for his text: "They shall ask their way
" to Zion with their faces thitherward; saying,
" Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in
" a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten."
Jer. L. 5.

I was very attentive to what the preacher said, but not impressed with any of his remarks till near the close of his sermon; when he addressed his hearers thus: "Some," said he, "instead of asking their way to Zion with their faces thitherward, are asking, I fear, their way to hell with their faces thitherward." This unexpected turn, I thought severe; but he said so much to justify his opinion on this subject, that I began to conclude, that what he reported might be true, and to suppose, that I had some reason to be alarmed at my own situation.

After the sermon, I took courage to ask the preacher some questions, and to invite him to sup with me at the public house. He answered my questions

better than I expected, but declined accepting my invitation. It being Saturday night, some of his friends said, they hoped to see me there again the following day. I answered, that I was on a journey, and intended to set out early the next morning. "How, Sir," said the preacher, "Do you travel on the Lord's day?" I replied, that the gentleman with whom I travelled had so determined. He then wished I might be kept from evil, and live to serve a better master. Thus we parted.

I am Sir,

Your's &c.

LETTER V.

1757. 1759.

S I R,

IN the morning, as we rode towards Bawtry, my master inquired how I spent my evening. I readily told him where I had been, and what I had heard.

heard. He laughed heartily at my simplicity. But when he found me a little more serious than he expected, his invectives against Methodists and Dissenters were very severe; and many of them whom he met in the course of that day, apparently coming from different places of worship, he railed at in a very indecent manner. As I had *no acquaintance* with them, it was not in my power to say much in their defence; but I thought it very wrong in my master to talk in such a manner on a Sunday, against a people that had, as I supposed, given him no offence; and I began to think, (though I was not so rude as tell him so,) that I had spent the Saturday evening as well in reflecting on what I had heard from behind the chair, as he himself had done at the parsonage house.

The alarm I had received from that preacher, was not less forcible on my mind, because of my master's invectives; yet it conveyed to me no knowledge of the way of salvation. The effects that immediately followed were these: I was afraid of living just as I had done, and resolved to reform my life; but hoped there was no need for any great change in my behaviour. In this dark state of mind, my former passions were still indulged, but

with this difference, that when my moral feelings were wounded, (which in those days were not delicate,) I feared, that I was still asking my way to hell with my face thitherward.

After my return to Holbeach, I continued with Mr. Wilkinson to the year 1758, but at the latter end of that year, I left his service, and went from him to live with Mr. John Richards, an eminent attorney at Spalding, and I well remember, that when I left Mr. Wilkinson, I had not forgotten his rudeness on our late journey, from which I drew this conclusion, that whatever the people were whom he insulted, his insults could never be defended.

I had not been long with Mr. Richards, before I went to hear a Baptist minister at Donnington, near Boston, whose name was Watts. His discourse, like that which I heard at Clayworth, was uninteresting to me till it was nearly finished; when Mr. Watts spake to this effect: “Sinner, “thou thinkest perhaps, that God will compound “with thee for thine iniquities. I tell thee, he “will not. No, he will have the utmost farthing.” How this alarming sentence was introduced, I did not observe; so that these words appeared to
me,

me, as the hand writing upon the wall to Belshazzar; for they seemed unconnected with any thing else, and very terrible.

On my return home, being alone, “What!” said I to myself, “Have I been asking my way
“to hell with my face thitherward, till I am
“plainly told, that God will not compound with
“sinners, but will have the utmost farthing.” Such tidings are tremendous. “That I have
“done any thing fully to satisfy divine justice, I
“dare not presume to assert; that I ever shall
“make a full compensation for the crimes I have
“committed, I dare not imagine; but to hear what
“I have now heard, that no payment in part
“will be accepted, that God will not compound
“with sinners; what shall I say? Is this equitable? Is it not being unreasonably severe?”—
These partial reasonings, Sir, quickly produced in my mind hard thoughts of God; and I soon found, that he who is displeased with the Almighty, can neither perform, will, nor think of that which is acceptable in his sight.

Mr. Watts, whom I heard at Donnington, was an old man. He had never seen me before, nor I him. I was convinced therefore, there was no-

thing which I could consider as personal in his discourse, and this made the sad tidings which I had heard from him the more awful, and alarming. I was indeed, equally a stranger to the man at Clayworth; but the name of that preacher, and what was his particular connection with the Methodists, I either never knew, or cannot now recollect.

Soon after I had heard Mr. Watts, Mr. Richards was pleased to say, that his three last clerks were all of them mad. The first of them, said he, was musically mad. The second, mathematically mad; and the present, meaning me, is religiously mad. But as Mr. Richards had no taste for music, nor mathematics, nor much for religion, his jests were no dishonour to either of the parties. The first of these clerks, Mr. Jonas Pratt, was a skilful musician. The second, Mr. Charles Wilkinson, was deeply versed in mathematical studies; but as to myself, how little of religion I then had, you have already seen; and the following anecdote will further prove.

In the year 1759, there was a public fast, which I suddenly resolved to keep as devoutly as I could. In the morning of that day, I went to church

church without my breakfast, and again in the afternoon, having eat only a little salt fish for my dinner. (You see, I was still a churchman, as indeed, all my relations were from time immemorial.) On my return from church the second time, I was not a little pleased in hearing our shepherd say to some of his companions, “ Well, “ I never thought any thing of these fasts before ; “ but as our clerk, who is a sensible young man, “ has kept this fast so strictly, I begin to think “ there must be something in them more than I “ supposed.” What John Nichols, (for that was his name,) afterwards thought of my devotion, I cannot tell. But being pressed that evening to play at cards, which at first, I refused to do, some of the party observed, that as I had been so very good all the day, I might safely allow myself a little relaxation at night, and perceiving them to be sincere, I complied with their request. Let not the church of England be judged of by my misbehaviour. It has indeed, many such members, as every church that is national must have, but these things are neither consistent with their articles, nor agreeable to learned and pious churchmen.

In November 1759, I formed, Sir, a connection which seemed to be very unpromising. Yet this connection, unpromising as it appeared, issued in my being brought to the knowledge of Christ, in my being married to an excellent Christian, and soon afterwards, in my being called to preach the gospel. I have now given you beforehand, the subjects of the three following letters.

I am Sir,

Yours, &c.

LETTER VI.

1759. 1760.

SIR,

THE unpromising connection, mentioned at the close of my last letter, was one that I formed with a watch-maker at Spalding, whose name was Broderick. He was a Protestant Dissenter, and the person that had induced me to hear old Mr. Watts

Watts at Donnington. By living with him, I hoped to enjoy those religious advantages which could not be expected in my former situation, and at the same time to avoid some temptations to which I had been exposed.

My religious sentiments were rather the jest of my acquaintance at present than otherwise. I therefore continued to receive as usual, many biddings to join them in their festivities. Often, Sir, I resolved to go no more to those entertainments, and as often secretly supposed, that I had taken my final leave of such companions. But the next pressing invitation to an assembly, or to a select party at cards, was to me invincible. Sometimes, I even thought it RIGHT to go again; for having said, I would take my leave of them all, it occurred to me, that when I said this, some of them were absent, so that to fulfil my word, I ought to pay them another visit. He that is enslaved by his vicious inclinations, seeks out many inventions to indulge them; nor are any of them more common with some people, nor in my opinion, more contemptible, than pretending to act on moral motives, when we know that our pursuit is vicious, or vain. To be more out of the way of these temptations, I went to live with Mr. Broderick.

Broderick. Thus, Sir, was I induced to lay down my pen and take up the file; and resolved to throw aside rolls of parchment, in order to inspect the motion, and to regulate the movement of a watch.

At first, this change in my condition was very grievous. Instead of that plentiful table, I had always been used to enjoy, I found at Mr. Broderick's that kind of frugality and parsimony, which was difficult for me to endure. The change of my employment was not more pleasing. Instead of frequently presiding in business of some importance, as I had done when employed in law affairs, both in public courts, and in private parlours, I was now confined to an obscure shop, and daily employed on such minute articles, that I soon grew impatient, and wished, with all my heart, I had never meddled with mechanical operations.

In a few weeks after I came to this place, Mr. Broderick invited me to hear his own pastor. His name was James Parker; he then preached at Billingay, a village about twenty miles from Spalding. Mr. Parker was an Independent; a man very rude in speech; but not in knowledge. His

His sentiments were strongly Calvinistical, but his manner of preaching extremely unpleasant and tedious. So at least, it seemed to me; for I was only pleased when I heard him say, TO CONCLUDE. After he had finished his discourse, he gave out a hymn which probably, I shall remember as long as I live; especially these three verses:

1. Come, let us triumph in the Lamb,
Our Lord that once did die;
We that believe in Jesus may
Have everlasting joy.
2. Come LAW of God, what hast thou now
Of us for to demand?
Thy CURSES all did meet on Christ,
That did our SURETY stand.
3. Tho' we do sin, thou canst not curse,
The curses all did lie
Upon our bleeding LORD, when he
Our Sacrifice did die.

The harshness of these numbers offended my ears, and the strange manner in which they were pronounced, hurt my feelings; but, Sir, the sentiments contained in these verses raised my indignation. How, said I, Dare any man say to his Maker,

“ Tho’ ”

“ Tho’ we do sin, thou CANST not curse.”

Such language, in any place, is intolerable; but in a place of worship, considered as devotion, and as such addressed to the Almighty, surely, this is BLASPHEMY.

Thus, Sir, I who was ignorant of the way of salvation; I, who had lived an immoral life, and who had lately been shut up under legal bondage, instead of being thankful to hear of redemption by Jesus Christ, felt myself thoroughly exasperated at such glad tidings; and in a very immoral temper, instantly became a furious zealot for the supposed interests of morality. I am afraid, Sir, that what is commonly called morality, has often such advocates as I have described; but sound morality always keeps her own place; and they who possess it own, that it is not the procuring cause, but the genuine effect of the grace of God.

When my passion subsided, I wished to know who was the author of that hymn which was sung at Billington, and was informed, that it was written by the Rev. Mr. Davis, formerly at Rothwell, Northamptonshire, and that Doctor Gill had published a new edition of his hymns. As I had a
high

high opinion of Doctor Gill, I wondered how a man of his learning could choose to be the editor of such a book. I resolved however to read his preface, and being much pleased with that, ventured to look for the hymn that gave me so much offence; and before I had read it through, the word SURETY made a deep impression on my mind. I think, Sir, till then, I never had any settled notion that the sufferings of Christ were vicarious, or that by them he had made a real, and complete atonement for sin. I was therefore, greatly surprised when I read these lines :

“ The curses all did lie

“ Upon our bleeding LORD, when he

“ Our SACRIFICE did die.”

On reading these words I reasoned thus: If, said I, this account of the sufferings of Christ is true, then to be sure, God need not compound with sinners for their iniquities; he may have, nay, according to this doctrine, he has had, the utmost farthing; and from this statement I inferred, that provided I had both a right and power to receive Jesus Christ as my SURETY, I should not, like an insolvent debtor, live any longer in continual danger of an arrest, nor should I

any more think of compounding with the Almighty for my transgressions; but on the contrary, joy in God through the atonement; and being thus released from all my slavish fears, I should then willingly endeavour to be subject to his preceptive will.

Under my former anxiety, I well knew, Sir, that my distress did not proceed from imaginary crimes, but from real offences; and that I could no more avoid the just consequences of those offences than I could deny the reality of their existence. My case therefore, had for some time, appeared to myself a lost case, in every view but one; for believing as I did, that all my sins left me, without excuse, I concluded, that unless I could hear of a remedy which would allow me to suppose the worst of my condition, and permit me to hope for complete deliverance, I could not be saved. But what that remedy was, or could be, had not entered into my heart to conceive; and you have seen, Sir, that when I first heard of such a cure, I could not believe THAT WAS IT, nor was I at all disposed to accept of such relief. But soon afterwards, as I have related, it pleased God to convince me, that HE had made HIM to be sin for us who knew no sin, that they who be-
lieve

lieve might be made the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ.

In this truly marvellous fact, I now rejoiced, yet with trembling, lest in a matter of such moment, I should by any means, be deceived. But to prevent ~~it~~, and to gain more complete satisfaction on the nature and ground of our justification in the sight of God, I read the scriptures, and prayed I might apprehend their meaning. I read also, the best commentators and expositors that fell in my way, and asked many questions of such ministers and private Christians, that seemed willing and able to give me information. I did more than this, for I was not only attentive to the different opinions of men on this serious subject, but observed, as well as I could, the different effect of their jarring sentiments on their life and conversation. The consequence was, that I evidently saw much more of a temper becoming the gospel of Christ, among them that lived by faith on him, than among those who either directly, or indirectly, placed a greater confidence on their own obedience than on the obedience and sufferings of the Son of God.

While I was still making further inquiries into the same subject, it gave me great pleasure to find, that many learned and pious men of the last century, both in the church of England and amongst Dissenters, were able advocates for justification by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. In short, the final, and pleasing issue of all my labor upon this leading article of my faith, was, that I obtained a clear and full conviction, that Jesus Christ was made the SURETY of a better covenant than that which was made with Moses; and I was thoroughly persuaded, that though the law of Moses made nothing perfect, the bringing in of a better hope did; by which hope, I now, for the first time, attempted to draw near to God.

I am Sir,

Yours, &c.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

1760. 1761.

S I R,

THE immediate consequences that followed on what, perhaps, you will call my conversion, by no means equalled my own expectation; for I was still more or less subject to such follies, and exposed to such difficulties, that I did not foresee. While I was immoral, and at the same time an advocate for the merit of morality, I gave my acquaintances no great offence; but when they heard that I would no longer allow that morality was the best ground of human hope, they were shocked at my supposed temerity, exasperated at my new opinions, and disposed to treat me with sufficient contempt.

I believe, Sir, any person that knew Spalding in the year 1760, and had then, or since, a serious regard for religion, will readily admit, that I then lived in an unpleasant situation. But in looking back to those days, I now think it my duty to confess

confess, that my own illregulated zeal, and want of Christian prudence, exposed me to many disagreeable things, which by sound discretion might have been avoided. Let it however, Sir, be remembered, that I was then young, that I had formed no connection which could procure me esteem, that I had no judicious friend to direct my mind, nor any pious person near me, well acquainted with engaging manners, and the necessary decorum of human life.

You, who have not had these difficulties to surmount, have reason to be thankful; and have not I, also, who have not only been carried through the temptations to which I have been exposed, but have lived to reap some advantage from those afflictions? Believe me, Sir, I now consider the trials which I then endured as so many vouchers of my sincerity, and as so many exercises, that led me into a better acquaintance with myself, and into the common tempers of common men, than otherwise I might have obtained.

While I was with Mr. Broderick, having but few to converse with on religious subjects, I read at all opportunities, such books as I found in his possession; and these, Sir, were more in number, and

and better in quality, than might be expected. Among them were the works of Doctor Gill, Doctor Crisp, Doctor John Owen, Doctor Thomas Goodwin; and the works of Mr. Caryl, Mr. Charnock, Mr. Flavel, and Mr. Elisha Coles. The labors of these eminent men thus falling into my hands at an early period in life, led me into a habit of thinking more closely on religious subjects than otherwise, I might have indulged; and I believe, Sir, that more depends on circumstances, not at all under our dominion, to ripen our understanding, and to enlarge, and correct our notions of things, than every one is willing to acknowledge, or than in the decline of life, we are able to recollect.

Doctor Gill was then living; and having read most of his written labors, I wished to sit under his ministry; and this favor I obtained in March 1760. The plea for my going to London was, to learn that part of the watch business which is called finishing, in order to return to Spalding, qualified to undertake Mr. Broderick's business; but these things were less upon my thoughts than the prospect I then had of sitting at the feet of Doctor Gill.

Having

Having found out his meeting, I kept closely by him while I staid in Town. Occasionally indeed, I heard Mr. Whitfield, and some other popular preachers, but none of them pleased me so well as the Doctor. His discourses were more evangelical, better studied, and argued, and, I thought, much more consistent, than those which I heard at the Tabernacle, and in some other crowded places of worship; and they furnished me with more materials for subsequent reflection than any sermons that I heard in London. I might indeed, except a few which I heard from the Rev. Mr. Brine; but though his sermons were judicious, his delivery was not at all engaging.

London seemed to me a kind of new world, and in it I met with some temptations I was not able to resist; so that while I continued there, though my knowledge was increased, my piety bore but a slender proportion to my knowledge. Yet in London, and under the ministry of Doctor Gill, I first had a serious apprehension that I might live to be a minister of Jesus Christ. The Doctor was then preaching on the character of Elihu, and his remarks on that young man, kindled in me ardent desires to possess that inspiration from the Almighty which giveth understanding. But my sudden

sudden return into the country, obliged me to lay aside all thoughts of making any advances towards the ministry for some time.

The occasion of my removal from London, was an affair that young people are generally in haste to accomplish. You must know, Sir, that in the month of October 1760, I went down to Spalding for a few days. In this journey, Mr. Broderick recommended to my attention a young woman then on a visit at Swineshead, and said so much in her favour, (especially of her good sense and piety,) that I resolved to pay her a visit, and judge for myself, of the truth of his report. My resolution was no sooner formed than fulfilled. I saw the object he had so much commended the next morning, and was sufficiently pleased with her appearance, and conversation; and I fancied at least, she was not displeased with mine. In short a correspondence by letter, soon after this visit, commenced, which to me was so engaging, that my letters were multiplied, and my desires to re-injoy her company daily increased.

Under the influence of this impatience, and being fully informed that Mr. Broderick was disposed to retire from Spalding, I returned into the country.

country, June 1761, and a few weeks after my return, I was married at Freeston near Boston, by a licence, which I could not obtain without alledging that I was a little older than I really was; this sin I committed, partly from a foolish notion, that the clergyman had no right to be strictly satisfied on this subject, and in part, from my ardent attachment to Miss Jessup.

Miss Jessup, Sir, was the daughter of Mr. George Jessup, a wealthy and reputable farmer at Timberland, near Sleaford, in Lincolnshire. She then lived with her elder brother, at Freestone. By this marriage, my temporal circumstances were not much advanced; for Mr. Jessup was very careful of his money, and was by no means pleased with his daughter's choice. This made it difficult for me to fulfil my engagement with Mr. Broderick. But this difficulty, I surmounted by the assistance of my own father, and instantly entered on his business, and took the greater part of his stock in trade. Thus, Sir, before I was twenty one, I sat down in the circumstances I have stated, to the common duties of common life.

As you are not yet married, I wish you never may, till you meet with a woman worthy of yourself, and who will think it her honor to be your wife. Immediately after the fall, the Lord said to Eve, "Thy desire shall be unto thine husband, and he shall rule over thee." The man was made to rule, and he that has not sense to maintain his authority in his own house, will make a bad husband; but this is a burden greater than can be borne, if his wife is not willing to be under such dominion. The order which God has established is essential to domestic happiness; therefore you may depend upon it, a woman that does not desire to be married, and married to you in preference to another, will make you a very indifferent wife. This was not my infelicity. Miss Jessup loved me sincerely; she did me good, and not harm, all the days of her life. That you may meet with such a companion, and be always pleased with her love, I sincerely wish.

I am Sir,

Yours, &c.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

1761. 1763.

S I R,

AS I never had any strong inclination for trade, the mechanical employment in which I was now engaged, soon became unpleasing; so that I made as much use of my pen as I did of my file, and was indeed, more intent to increase my acquaintance with religious subjects, than to oblige my customers, and to secure their future favors.

The doctrine of baptism had often occupied my thoughts before I went to London, and now it was re-considered with stricter attention. And here, since you are a Baptist, it may not be amiss to mention one difficulty that stood in my way, before I could submit to be baptized.

I had heard, Sir, frightful tales of the Baptists, at Munster, and had read unpleasant accounts of their tumultuous proceedings. These reports were circulated to insinuate, that there was a real connection

connection between baptism and rebellion. If there is, said I, it cannot be my duty to be baptized. How it happened, that I had so strong and fixed an aversion to rebellion before I went to London, I will briefly relate.

As I was born at Spalding, in the year 1741, at the close of the rebellion in favor of the Pretender, I was about five years of age. At that time, and for some years afterwards, the story of him, and of those that countenanced his cause, was often sounded in my ears; and as the inhabitants of Spalding were well affected to Government, this story made so deep an impression on my mind, that before I was fifteen, I could not see without alarm, the shadow of civil disturbance; and Sir, let me add, that at fifty-five, rebellious positions, on whatever pretence they are brought forward, strongly excite my indignation; above all, when they seemed to be sanctioned by religious frenzy. But I return, Sir, to the story of **Munster**.

After I had taken some pains to inform myself of that affair, I found that what was said of those misguided people, was told by their enemies; that their wild and extravagant notions, had been

honestly, and strongly censured by the Baptists themselves, both on the Continent, and in this country, and that there was no more reason to connect their immoral behaviour with their being baptized by immersion, than to say, that the usurpation of Oliver Cromwell, the murder of King Charles the First, and the late rebellion in forty five, were, all of them, owing to the practice and prevalence of infant baptism.

What a strange effect has prejudice on the generality of mankind! They hear of insurrections, of wars, and of other dreadful evils, springing up, and carried into practice, by the warmest advocates for infant baptism, without being at all surprized; this produces no suspicion, that their favorite custom has not the sanction of the New Testament, or that it is in any sense, injurious to society; whereas, if once in a century, a few individuals, who were baptized by immersion, behave themselves in a riotous manner, the fact is aggravated, the whole denomination violently censured, and their guilt is charged, not on any common principle of human depravity, but on a particular sentiment, which has no more relation to rebellion, than to witchcraft, to animal magnetism, or to playing at cards.

Having

Having thus surmounted the difficulty that stood in my way concerning believers baptism, I became an advocate for it, and resolved to submit to that solemn ordinance as soon as I conveniently could, and a pamphlet which I published in the year 1763, brought this matter to an issue, sooner than I expected. The pamphlet I now speak of, was called *Mechanicus and Flaven: or the Watch Spiritualized*. This fanciful piece was the first production of my pen. The occasion of my writing in this manner, I believe was this; having read Mr. Flavel's *Husbandry Spiritualized*, I was willing to try, whether I could not write something on my own profession that might convey similar instruction.

To be sure, by indulging such remote analogies, almost any thing might be said of any thing; yet it appears to me, that some gentlemen have been too severe in their censures on this mode of instruction. A pious man, does not write in this manner entirely at random. He has a set of principles which he thinks are sound, and which he believes he is able to defend. To bring forward those principles to public notice, and to recommend them to the attention of his readers, he is disposed

disposed to clothe them in the wardrobe of fancy; and if his sentiments are just, his genius lively, and his intentions peaceable and pure, where is the mighty harm of his being thus employed? Flavel and Bunyan will be read, when the metaphysical Essays of Voltaire and Hume are forgotten, or despised.

In looking over my first publication, it gives me pleasure to find, that in the year 1763, I had an unfeigned esteem for the leading truths of Christianity, and that my love of loyalty, of order, and of the peace of the public, were openly avowed. Some people have lived to laugh at their first serious impressions; but I thank God, this is not my misfortune. The boyisms, and other imperfections of this little piece, are sufficiently manifest, yet it contains those sentiments, both on religious and civil subjects, which I have no intention to renounce.

At Spalding, this pamphlet confirmed several in an opinion, that I was, or soon should be, a dissenting minister; and it was currently reported, that I had began to preach in my own house.

Nothing

Nothing more however, was yet done there, than my occasionally reading to a few friends, such printed sermons as were in my possession; except sometimes adding a few words of my own, when I wished to make any subject a little plainer, and to bring it a little closer to the company. This, Sir, with singing and prayer, was for some-time, all that I ventured to perform.

But at the latter end of this year, a friend, in whom I had great confidence, and of whose judgment I had a good opinion, wished me to explain these words: “Ye see then, how that
“by works a man is justified, and not by faith
“only.” James ii. 24. I well knew why these words were selected, and in speaking from them carefully attended to that design. How to reconcile this assertion with the language of St. Paul was the question. I therefore attempted to distinguish between justification before God, and justification in the conscience of a believer, from the evidence of both these blessings, by the works of faith before men. These distinctions were approved and commended. The consequence was, that others desired to hear me on the same subject, and afterwards, on any other text which I might be disposed to select. But I was rebuked

in my own mind, for complying a few times with their wishes; because I had not yet been baptized, nor submitted my gifts to the regular trial of any church. You shall have the sequel of this story in my next letter.

I am Sir,

Yours, &c.

L E T T E R IX.

1763. 1764.

S I R,

IN the year 1763, a lecture was preached in the city of Peterborough, every other Lord's day, by a set of respectable dissenting ministers sent thither by Mrs. Coke, of Stoke Newington. The friends who attended that lecture had heard of me, and some of them had seen, and read the pamphlet I have mentioned. On one of those days in which no minister was expected, they invited me to pay them

them a visit. But when I went to Peterborough, the preacher next in turn, mistook his appointment, so that we met together for the first time, in that city. The name of this gentleman, was Mr. Joseph Billing. He lived at Gamlingay, near Potton; and being informed of my present situation, and of the invitation I had received, he pressed me strongly, to speak before him, and the friends that were then assembled. In the morning of that day, I resisted the force of his arguments; but in the afternoon, he spake to this effect:

“ Sir, I have heard a pleasing account of
“ you; and it is said, you are possessed of gifts
“ for the ministry. If this is true, you should
“ not conceal them; nor is it proper that you-
“ yourself, should, in this case, be a judge of
“ your own abilities. Let me hear you. I will
“ faithfully tell you what I think of your dis-
“ course. If you refuse my request, I shall go
“ home and say, that the young man we have
“ heard of at Spalding, has no regard for order.
“ Sir, we want preachers that are properly qua-
“ lified for the pulpit. If you are so qualified,
“ I shall rejoice. If you are not, give me leave
“ to

“ to say, the sooner your mouth is stopped the
“ better.”

This rough address, though it greatly agitated my mind, I much approved. I complied therefore with his request; and after I had retired for meditation and prayer, at the time appointed, I preached for the first time, in a pulpit, before Mr. Billing and the Christian friends, who were then assembled together, from a passage in Zechariah. They all of them agreed, that it was their duty to encourage me to be a minister of Jesus Christ. Mr. Billing assured me, he was of that opinion, and to convince me of his sincerity, he urged me to join the church under his care, and submit myself to their decision; which said he, I am fully persuaded, will be in your favor.

I thanked him for his respectful attention to a young man, and a stranger; but informed him, that till I had consulted a particular friend on a subject so serious, I could not give him a final answer. The friend, Sir, whom I afterwards consulted, was the Rev. Mr. John Browne of Kettering. On stating to him the circumstances of my journey to Peterborough, and asking his

his advice, he replied, that he thought there was something providential in my meeting with Mr. Billing, in the manner which I had related. He informed me, that Mr. Billing was his cousin, that he thought the church at Gam'gay was sound in the faith, and advised me to accept of the invitation I had received.

The church at Gamlingay was formerly a branch of the church at Bedford, when it was under the pastoral care of JOHN BUNYAN. It held therefore, what is called, mixed communion. Before this church, I made a verbal, and sincere confession of my faith in Christ, and added, that *I thought* it was the duty of them that believed in him to be baptized; but, as Mr. Billing was a Pædo-baptist, I was sent the next day to the Rev. Mr. Clark of Blenham, who baptized me in his own garden, in the presence of the messengers of the church at Gam'gay, and in the presence of several other spectators.

The following Lord's day, I was requested to preach at Gamlingay; and by different adjournments, I continued to preach there, till the members of that church were fully satisfied it was their duty to say, it appeared to them, that it had

pleased

pleased God to give me those abilities, which should be employed in the public ministry of his word. But previous to the general vote of the church, and the report of that act to me, I was requested to preach what they called a doctrinal sermon; which at the time they appointed, I preached from these words: “By grace
“are ye saved, through faith, and that not of
“yourselves: it is the gift of God.” Eph. ii. 8.

After I had preached this sermon, the church, with the pastor and deacons, cheerfully and unanimously declared, “That I was, in their judgment and belief, called of God to give myself
“to the ministry, and to preach the gospel of
“Christ, wherever it might please HIM, in the
“course of his providence to permit me to be
“so employed.” Mr. Billing, and two other ministers that were present, united in fervent prayers, that I might be guided where to settle, and that my labors might be acceptable to God, and approved of men.

Had the preceeding part of this letter been sent to Dr. * * *, he would have said, “Is
“this the whole of your sanction for appearing
“in the pulpit? What! No regular education,
“no

“ no classical erudition, no acquaintance with
“ the learned languages, no laying on of hands,
“ but sanctioned only by a few plain, ob-
“ scure Christians, and by two or three minis-
“ ters, unknown to fame !” But, Sir, you will
not thus animadvert on what I have written. For
though it has pleased God to give you advantages
I have not received, you know very well, that
though Doctor * * * had a regular education,
is possessed of classical erudition, has a tolerable
acquaintance with the learned languages, and
was ordained by the laying on of hands ; you
know very well, notwithstanding all this, that the
Doctor could never, in any place, commend him-
self to the consciences of real Christians, and
much less obtain the esteem and confidence of
those believers who had made any considerable
progress in Christianity.

However eligible it may be to possess at once,
an eminent degree both of gifts and of grace, this
is a felicity that but few ministers enjoy ; and as
no man has a right to say when, by what means,
and under what circumstances, he should be
brought to an acquaintance with Christ, or after
that, to speak in his name, you will admit, Sir,
that if any minister chooses to give a narrative of
his

his own life, or of his call to preach the gospel, he must, as an honest man, speak of these things as the facts will admit; and by so doing, he is more likely to be of some service to succeeding ministers of his own size, perhaps also, to some above it, than if, from any improper motives, he had suppressed some particulars, and invented I know not what, to draw up a more pleasing tale.

I do not pretend, Sir, to be disinterested by dealing so frankly with you. Far from it, for I reason thus: Had my outset in the ministry been more splendid and promising, Mr. * * * might have formed those expectations on my following letters, it would not be in my power to satisfy; but according to the just account that I have given him, he cannot be greatly disappointed with the subsequent part of this correspondence.

I am Sir,

Your's &c.

LETTER X.

1764. 1770.

S I R,

WHEN I consider the many difficulties I had to surmount, in order to be a dissenting minister, I now wonder how they were overcome. Gamlingay was forty miles from Spalding. My frequent journies thither, obliged me to ride several hundred miles; and just before I obtained the Call spoken of in my last letter, it was thought prudent I should go to London with Mr. Billing, and one of the deacons, to answer to some charges, that envy and ill-will had exhibited against me. And what had I, Sir, to ballance these anxieties and fatigues? You know, that I had chosen to be connected with what was then considered the poorest, and most obscure of the three denominations of Protestant dissenters in this country, and that I had no hope of receiving annually for all my labors, a stipend that would equal the salary of a common exciseman: nay, Sir, for some time, I only thought of preaching...

occasionally, without being settled any where as a pastor, so that neither honor, nor emolument directed my steps to the pulpit. In the common sense of those words, that could not be my case; for after all, I was in my own eyes, a minister upon sufferance, and not of any distinguished repute; and was, in all likelihood, to live unnoticed, and to die unknown.

But, Sir, I am convinced, there are stronger inducements, both to mental and moral improvement, than riches and renown; and he that acts upon them, may safely leave all his affairs with God; for by so doing, he will certainly obtain the testimony of a good conscience, a jewel of immense value; and it is probable, that he will command that homage from others, even from the unworthy, which the venal, and vain glorious, cannot procure. When I first fancied, I should occupy a public station in the church, intelligence and integrity seemed to rise in their value. I thought, if I could possess as much of each, as to be upon equal ground with other ministers of Christ, inferior qualifications might afterwards be obtained; and permit me to add, that by regarding this decision, I have not been disappointed.

In May 1764, I removed from Spalding, to Whittlesea, and preached there and at Peterborough, a few months, when I received an invitation to remove to the church at Kimbolton, in Huntingdonshire; a church, that had been for many years under the pastoral care of the Rev. Mr. Lewis Wayman, then lately deceased. Mr. Wayman lived to a good old age, and has left behind him, that evidence of his being set for the defence of the gospel, which none of his opponents have, in my opinion, been able to diminish. But as the church at Kimbolton approved of infant baptism, and as I could not be persuaded to conceal my own sentiments, on that controverted subject, I continued with them only from November 1764, to May 1765.

At that period, I removed from Kimbolton to Sheepshead, in Leicestershire, a large and populous village, about four miles from Loughborough, and six from Ashby-de-la-Zouch. At Sheepshead, I succeeded the Rev. William Christian, who had long been the pastor of a Baptist church in that village. He died very suddenly, at a meeting of ministers, and while he was conversing with them on religious subjects.

A kind of funeral sermon was preached for him at the next meeting of ministers, at Arnsby, by the Rev. Isaac Woodman. His text was, 2. Kings ii. 11, 12. “ And it came to pass, as they
“ still went on and talked, that behold, there ap-
“ peared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and
“ parted them both assunder; and Elijah went
“ up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha
“ saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the
“ chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.
“ And he saw him no more.” The judicious manner in which Mr. Woodman acquitted himself on this occasion, strongly caught my attention; and being afterwards intimately acquainted with him, I had for that amiable man a degree of respect, much greater than I had ever felt before for any other minister. His delivery was not engaging; but his good sense, prudence, benevolence, and unaffected cheerfulness, were, among my acquaintance, incomparable.

When I removed to Sheephead, I had invitations from Lymington, in Hampshire, from Peterborough, Spalding, and some other places; but I made choice of Sheephead, because I much valued the ministers in that neighbourhood, and because I had formed a good opinion of Mr. Christian,

Christian, and had heard a good report of the church, lately under his pastoral care. Here therefore, I removed, with my wife, son, and servant, May 28th 1765. My son was born at Kimbolton, at the beginning of this year, and is the only child I ever had.

At the latter end of this year, I buried the eldest daughter of Mr. Christian, and preached her funeral sermon. This sermon I afterwards published. The text was, “Precious in the sight of the Lord, is the death of his saints.” Psal. cxvi. 15. When you look over this sermon, be so obliging as to inform me, whether I have not misinterpreted the text. By precious, I have understood pleasing; but some think, that preservation from death, is the sense of the word precious in that place. If you consult Poole’s *Synopsis in loc*, and Gussetius on the word JAKAR, you will find something may be said in favor of my interpretation; and I am sure, Sir, you will admit, that in the death of every saint, many things are pleasing to him that died for them, and pleasing to them that have had the honor to die in the Lord. You may also find some good remarks on this subject, in a funeral sermon

G 3

sermon preached by Doctor Gill, on these words :
“ For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”
Philip. i. 21.

Being now with a Baptist church, and sufficiently respected by it, there seemed to be no bar to my settlement, but the thought of living in a country village; this I had never done before, and then it appeared to me a kind of residence that I knew not how to endure. But as many things concurred to make the trial of that task my duty, I consented to the wishes of my friends, and was settled pastor over the church at Sheepshead, August 1766.

Upon this occasion, the Rev. Mr. Browne, of Kettering, preached to me from these words :
“ Take heed therefore to yourselves, and to all
“ the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath
“ made you overseers to feed the church of God,
“ which he hath purchased with his own blood.”
Acts xx. 28. And the Rev. Mr. Hall, of Arnsby, preached to the church at Sheepshead from these words : “ For now we live, if ye stand fast in
“ the Lord.” 1 Thess. iii. 8.

Soon after this settlement, having but few friends to visit, who had leisure and taste for such conversation as I wished to enjoy, I employed myself in writing a Poem on Conversion, which I published at the latter end of this year. But, Sir, you who are skilled in numerous composition, and are pleased with judicious returns of well measured accents, will wonder why I called this little piece a Poem. It was written, however, in rhyme, and if any thing can induce you to run through it, I suppose, it will be your own attachment to those doctrines which I have there endeavoured to defend.

At Sheepshead, I was over run with teachers that delighted to magnify the power of free-will in fallen creatures, and who as constantly propagated depreciating notions of the grace of God. As some of my friends were hurt by their declamatory harrangues, I wished to guard them against such danger. These were the circumstances that brought forward my verses on conversion ; which, with all their faults, were, at least upon par with those pamphlets and sermons that I then ventured to censure and oppose.

In the following year, 1767, I published a short Catechism in Metre, on the scripture names of the Old and New Testaments; of which I shall only say, that it contains, I suppose, as much information as children commonly meet with in such little books.

In the year 1770, a new association of the Baptist churches, like those in other parts of England, was held at Kettering, in Northamptonshire. The subject of the association letter for that year, was Election. This letter was drawn up by me, and contains, Sir, those sentiments on personal election which I yet approve, and those inferences which I think are fairly drawn from that doctrine; and if so, you will allow I have proved, that the doctrine of election, as stated and defended in that letter, is a doctrine according to godliness.

Though I have begun to pay some attention to my printed papers, I take no notice of the prices of each article, because I am not a bookseller, and because most of my publications have been long since out of print.

I am Sir,

Yours, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XI.

1771. 1772.

S I R,

THE death of the learned and pious Doctor Gill, happened October 14th 1771, in the seventy third year of his age; and the letter that brought me the report of his death, contained a remark that I much approved. He is dead, said the author of that letter, but God is able to raise up a legion of Doctor Gills to support his own cause.

Soon after the Doctor's death, the people at Carter Lane, requested me to preach for them a few weeks. Long before I received this invitation, I had resolved, that if ever I should have the honor to preach in that place, it should be from these words: "He found him in a desert
" land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he
" led him about, he instructed him, he kept him
" as the apple of his eye." Deut. xxxii. 10.

I had

I had heard Doctor Gill preach from that text in the year 1760, and thought, that what God had done for Jacob and his posterity, he had began to perform in my favor, by bringing me under the ministry of such a man. This I wished to acknowledge; nor can I look back on that sermon, and the occasion of it, with indifference to this day.

In this visit to London, I recollected a former visit, which I should have mentioned in my last letter. It was I believe, the year 1770, when I came up to town, to collect for the enlarging our meeting-house at Sheepshead. In that journey, I had the pleasure to hear the Doctor preach the last discourse of his body of practical divinity, and to sit down with him at the Lord's table. The manner in which he closed that sermon, was nearly in these words:

“ Thus have I, by the grace of God, gone
“ through a body of doctrinal, and practical
“ divinity in the pulpit; in doing which, I have
“ not shunned to declare to you all, according to
“ my ability, the whole counsel of God. I am
“ free from the blood of you all. I say, I am
“ free from the blood of you all! God grant,
“ that

“ that none of the sermons which I have preach-
“ ed in the course of this work, may rise up
“ against any of you another day! God grant
“ it may not be so! Amen.”

It is remarkable, that in the year 1770, though I was respectfully invited to preach for Mr. Messer, at Grafton-Street, I rejected that request. Why I did this, you shall know by another letter. But in the year 1771, I preached more than once for Mr. Messer, and afterwards became his successor; of which you will hear more in its proper place.

While I was then in London, I published a sermon on Romans x. 3. This sermon contains the substance of two discourses I had preached at Sheepshead, and contains, as I then thought, and still think, a safe view of the only ground of a sinners hope, and of the only way in which believers can die unto sin, and live unto God. A thousand of these sermons were soon sold off, and a second edition of them has been long since demanded.

When I returned to Sheepshead, I endeavoured as usual, to improve my time by reading many authors, and by writing on a variety of subjects;
and

and when thus employed, I forgot where I was, and enjoyed myself as much at Sheepshead, as I have since done at London, and with more safety than in this great city. But while I continued there, I met with many affecting changes. Among the pleasing circumstances in that situation were these: our meeting-house was considerably enlarged, a baptistry was made in the front of the meeting, the burying ground on the other side was augmented, a freehold dwelling-house, with right of common in the fields, were given me by a friend near Leicester, many members were added to the church, and the stated number of the congregation was considerably increased. But on the other hand, while I was at Sheepshead, I buried my wife, my brother William, my own father, and several of my best friends, to whose counsel and kindness I had been much indebted.

The death of my wife, which happened in 1765, was a sharper stroke than I had felt before, but much softened by the consolation which she enjoyed in her last affliction, and by the triumphant manner in which she finished her course. Her funeral sermon was preached by the Rev. Mr. Hall, of Arnsby, from these words, “ Because
“ I live,

“ I live, ye shall live also,” John xiv. 19 : a text which she chose herself, and had for some years before her decease, much enjoyed. She was buried in the Meeting-house at Sheepshead, December 8th 1765, aged 29 years.

Of my brother William, I can only say, that I had an opportunity of seeing him in his last hours at Nottingham, that my visit was well taken, and I hope of some use to him in his dying moments. My father died suddenly, at my own house at Sheepshead, by a large evacuation of blood. His funeral sermon was preached by Mr. Hall, of Arnsby. The text was, “ Be still “ and know that I am God.” Psal. xlv. 10. He died, July 6th 1767, aged 70, and was buried in the grave yard, at Sheepshead ; in which, a grave stone informs the reader, that he was my father, and that I owed much to his parental affection.

Among the select friends that I buried at Sheepshead, two of them were deacons ; Mr. William Bently, and Mr. William Harris. They were both of them useful in the church, and their decease was sincerely lamented. Mr. Harris occasionally preached with good acceptance ; but it does not appear, he ever had any intention to give

himself wholly to the ministry, or to be a settled pastor. The youngest daughter of this good man, my former wife recommended to me as a suitable companion after her decease, and to her I was afterwards married at Sheepshead. She is yet living, and has now for more than thirty years, been to me a faithful, and useful wife, and to my son, a prudent and affectionate mother-in-law.

These afflicting changes, Sir, made Sheepshead more unpleasant to me than it had been before ; though in truth, I was never thoroughly reconciled to that situation. However, while I continued there, I pursued my studies closely, with, I suppose, a students common lot ; for I went on sometimes with great pleasure, and sometimes with vexation.

Let me mention to you some of my difficulties. The incoherent sentiments of Sandeman, the more dangerous positions of Robert Barclay, and some of the peculiar notions of Mr. Jonathan Edwards, of New England, gave me some trouble. Sandeman I soon laid aside, wondering how sentiments so ill sorted, could be propagated and jumbled together by the same man. Friend Barclay, reminded me of a book, called A Snake
in

in the Grass ; and of his insidious remarks on an external revelation, and on some of the doctrines of the Bible, I was soon weary. Just as I turned from him, I thought with advantage on these words : “ Search the scriptures ; in them “ ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they “ which testify of me.” But the reasoning of Mr. Jonathan Edwards, on some of his peculiar notions, was not so easily resisted. Yet as I continued to read him, both on the WILL, and on RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS, I sometimes met with those assertions and arguments, which I could not approve ; and I will venture to add, that they who sit down to the works of that pious man with caution, will reap more advantage from them, than some of his warmest admirers have yet obtained. As to Mr. Brainerd, and Mr. Bellamy, they seemed to me much inferior to Mr. Edwards : and I am still of that opinion.

You must not imagine, Sir, that while I was at Sheepshead, I was wholly given up to study, for I also attended to what is now called village, and itinerant preaching, and as I kept a horse, and began to be better known amongst the Dissenters, I not only preached for sometime in several of the neighbouring villages, but in many places

much more remote from Sheephead; for before I left the country, it appears to me, that I rode about two thousand miles a year.

These journies had not always a good effect on my mind. I returned from many of them, wishing for another occasion to go abroad. But though I was more than once invited to leave Sheephead, yet when I seriously considered the consequence of taking such a step, I could not resolve to leave a people to whom I had been indebted for many favors, and with whom I had lived in peace, more than seven years. I therefore continued at Sheephead longer than I once expected to stay in that village. This was to my advantage; for had I removed sooner from the country to London, I am now convinced, that such a change in my condition might have been worse for me, and not so well for the church in Grafton-Street. But of my removal to London, and by what means it was brought forward, you may expect to be informed in my next letter.

I am Sir,

Yours, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XII.

1772. 1773.

SIR,

AS life has always been my burden without employment, after I had resisted some strong temptations to remove from Sheephead, I continued to form new projects to fill up my time. I read with renewed attention, most of the books and manuscripts, which I found in Mr. Christian's study, and purchased, and borrowed, as many books as I could at Leicester, Nottingham, and else where. Some of these books I abridged; from others I made select quotations, and when I was weary of this drudging business, I scribbled over many quires of paper on a variety of subjects. I do not repent of these labors, since, by being thus employed, I obtained a more accurate and extensive view of many things than I should have done by being indolent, or by preach-

ing a great number of crude discourses, such as are much in vogue, and in most places, too much admired.

But besides these labors, before I left Sheepshead, I opened a school, and soon had more children under my care than was convenient. This act was not only pleasing to some of my friends, but procured me respect from several families that were not Dissenters, having taken their children under my care; but my chief inducement to engage in this toilsome task, was the hope of giving my son better instructions than I was able to procure for him in any other place. It appears however to me, from the little experience I had of teaching children, that those persons who mean to excel in that honorable employ, should give themselves wholly to it. I am afraid, that he who is both the minister and the schoolmaster, has taken too much upon him. If he could not help it, he is an object of pity; but as a matter of choice, it should not be applauded.

While I was thus engaged in June 1773, I found my mind gradually impressed with such a sense of the reality, and importance of revealed religion,

religion, as exceeded every thing that I had felt before; nor have I since that period met with any visitation of the same kind, which, in all respects, has equalled the felicity I then for many weeks enjoyed.

This gracious visit, if I may call it by that name, was unforeseen and unexpected. But all my religious consolations have ever been the fruit of sovereign favor, nor do I now expect any additional manifestations of the love of God, on any inferior foundation. I recollect, that just before, I had been reading some accounts of the spread of the gospel abroad and at home, without much effect; but afterwards, musing on those accounts, I blushed in thinking how much zeal some ministers had manifested in the cause of God, more than I had yet felt, or had statedly prayed to possess; and soon, (without the least change in my doctrinal sentiments,) my heart was hot within me, accompanied with such freedom of thought, and of speech, on religious subjects, that at present, I can not exactly describe. I shall therefore only say, that secret, social, and public prayer, that preaching, catechizing children, reading the bible, meditating on the scriptures, and christian conversation, were so managed by me,

as

as they had not been before ; I mean to say, with that degree of pleasure and vigour, with that solicitude to edify others, and with that desire to grow in grace myself, and with such fear and godly jealousy, lest any thing should chill my zeal, or give a wrong bias to my affections, as I had not experienced in any former revival of religion, either at Sheepshead, or, in any other place.

Yet, Sir, this pleasing renovation of mind, was soon tarnished by my imprudence. Had it not been so, probably, I had yet been at Sheepshead ; and I freely own, I had rather live there, or any where else, continually possessing what I then enjoyed, than live where I now am, not enjoying the presence of God. But the curse of Cain has not fallen upon me. I am not hid from the face of the LORD.

Some of my friends at Sheepshead, when I was thus favored from on high, saw and heard, what they could not understand ; because they judged of what they saw and heard, not by the word of God, but by a lower standard. This mode of judging by their own experience, produced ill founded surmises, and disingenuous censures, which, as they fell under my notice, wrought

wrought in me improper resentments. Words begat words on both sides; freedom of explanation soon became impracticable, and to widen the breach between us, certain go-betweens lent their officious, and unblessed assistance. Thus, Sir, by our mutual indiscretions, when I was more likely to be of service at Sheepshead than at any former period, I was determined to leave it; nor did my friends adopt the wisest measures to make me revoke that hasty resolution.

But when I resolved to stay no longer at Sheepshead, I assure you, I had not any other place in view. This was censured by some of my friends abroad, as a very imprudent thing, and by others full of worldly wisdom, it was not believed. It was however pleasing to me, I had the witness in myself, that I was not induced to leave Sheepshead on the promise, nor even on the prospect of obtaining what is commonly called a better place.

But it has been said, that if I had no assurance of such a change, I could not doubt of the consequence. Such language, Sir, is paying a greater compliment to me, than some who have talked in this manner, are always inclined to bestow on
your

your correspondent. Their inference is totally unfounded. I seriously did doubt, not only whether I should remove to a better place, but whether I should ever again be employed as a minister of Christ in any comfortable situation. Yet I never repented of the principle on which I acted; so far from it, that were I again to remove, which God forbid, no man should have reason to say, that I quitted my present connections on venal motives.

While I was in some perplexity where to go, and what to do, I received several respectful invitations from churches of my own denomination; and among the rest, one from the church then meeting in Grafton Street, London. I was more surprized at that invitation than at any other; for when I was in London in the year 1770, I refused to preach to them, though strongly pressed to comply with their request; because it appeared to me, they had used their former pastor, the Rev. Mr. Anderson, unkindly in his old age: and it seemed the more strange to me, because I had heard, that since the death of Mr. Messer, who succeeded Mr. Anderson, they had actually made choice of another pastor. But having several friends in London, whom I wished
to

to consult on my affairs, I resolved to pay the church in Grafton Street a visit; but I did not imagine that my services and temper, would be acceptable to them,

The visit of which I now speak, was paid in August 1773, and proved more acceptable than I had foreseen. It procured for me a written, and respectful invitation to return to Town, to which, after consulting many friends upon it, I wrote an answer, such as at this day, I am not ashamed to own. The following words in that answer, permit me to quote.

“ ——— Upon the whole then, I do at present, think it my duty to accept your call; at the same time, I assure you, when the six months for which I am invited, are expired, I shall not look upon you in the least obliged to renew your call, unless it shall then appear to yourselves, to be your duty to do it, heartily, and as in the sight of God. On the other hand, while I am willing in this, and in all other things, to preserve your independency inviolate, I am equally resolved so to preserve it, as not enslave and fetter myself. I think it my duty therefore to add, that when the six months are

“ expired

" expired, I shall hold myself equally at liberty
" with you as to any further engagement."

After this, having received fresh assurances, that my return to Town was expected and desired, on the 19th of October 1773, I brought up my family to London. We were met on the road at Whetstone, by more than twenty of our friends, most of whom are now deceased, and were, after partaking of refreshment, conducted by them to lodgings provided for us in Tower Street, Seven Dials; in which we continued only a few weeks, and then removed to Mortimer Street, Cavendish Square.

I am Sir,

Your's &c.

LETTER

LETTER XIII.

1773. 1774.

S I R,

HAVING thus changed my situation, I soon perceived, that with it, a change of duties, and of trials, were rapidly approaching; for I saw, that some of the members of the church in Grafton Street, held very erroneous notions concerning the person and character of Jesus Christ, that others of them, held loosely the best of sentiments, and that some were of such a cast, that we were not likely to agree either on political, or religious subjects. It is true, I had a respectable majority on my side; but these things alarmed me, and the more so, as I knew that I possessed a much greater degree of fortitude than of sound discretion.

It is, Sir, a little remarkable, that the first sermon I preached, after I had brought my family to

Town, was from these words: "If so be the
" Lord will be with me, then shall I be able to
" drive them out, as the Lord has said." Jos. xiv.

12. The object I then had in view, was to shew the great importance of being favored with the presence of God, in the discharge of our undoubted duty, and to prove, that though opposition might still be expected, nay, therefore expected, yet that they who enjoy the presence of God in the path of obedience, would, however opposed, be victorious. This sermon was much talked of when my troubles commenced, and I believe, that some things delivered in that discourse, were recollected by myself, and by the friends who stedfastly adhered to me, much to our advantage.

On February 1, 1774, I was received into full communion with the church in Grafton Street, by a letter of dismission from the church at Sheepshead, and on the fourteenth of that month, the members of the church in Grafton Street, gave me a call to accept of the pastoral office among them. This call was signed by a hundred and fourteen persons, to which I returned a written answer. In that answer, after assigning the reasons which had led me to accept their call, the
means

means of my future subsistence among them was stated by me, to the following effect:—“ As
“ to temporalities, I doubt not, but whatsoever is
“ collected, or any other way received for my use,
“ will be faithfully, and cheerfully communi-
“ cated to me, by your deacons. If that should
“ at any time, be insufficient to maintain my fa-
“ mily with reputation, I hope, on proper notice
“ of it, with evidence of the fact, you will, if it
“ be in your power, make up such deficiency;
“ and if it should at any time exceed what I have
“ mentioned, I hope, the Lord will enable me to
“ make it manifest, that it is given me with his
“ blessing, and that wherein I am successful, I
“ desire to be useful.”

Your private fortune, Sir, has not made it necessary for you to be so careful; but unless preachers, and people in common, clearly understand each other in these affairs, many contentions are apt to rise, which are seldom settled to mutual satisfaction. What I have now laid before you, met with the approbation of the church in Grafton Street, and some time afterward, they entered the following note into their church book : “ Agreed, that Mr. Martin, may
I 2 “ have

“ have the liberty to choose from time to time,
“ any two of the Deacons, to collect, and pay to
“ him, what they may receive for his use.”

Every thing being arranged to our general satisfaction, the day in which they were publicly to renew their call, and I in public to accept it, came under our consideration. That period was soon appointed, and on Thursday, March 31, 1774, in the presence of many witnesses, we assembled for that purpose.

The Rev. Mr. Wallin opened the business of that day, received the accounts from the church, of the steps they had taken since the death of Mr. Messer, and their reasons for choosing me to succeed him; and being satisfied with their report, made by Mr. Thomas Yeoman, he desired them to confirm their call of me to be their pastor, by holding up their right hands. When this was done, Mr. Wallin reminded me of what I had heard and seen, and desired me to signify my acceptance of their call, with the leading reasons which now induced me to accept it. I did this, in a manner that met with his approbation. He then wished me to give him, and the audience, a brief confession of my faith.

With

With this request, I cheerfully complied; and my confession being approved of, I was then declared to be the pastor of the church there assembled, and Mr. Wallin concluded this part of the service, with his best wishes, that the union formed that morning, might be lasting, and to the glory of God.

On this occasion, the Rev. Mr. Booth preached to me, from these words: "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, That they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works." Tit. iii. 8. Afterwards, the Rev. Mr. Macgowan preached to the church from these words: "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise." Eph. v. 15. Several ministers in the course of this busy morning, engaged in prayer, and the whole of the opportunity was, I believe, as well conducted as most of those services commonly are.

I make no remark, Sir, on the respectable ministers which I have mentioned. To you it would be unnecessary; and to others, if these letters should go out of your hands, it would require more leisure than I can command to do them

justice, and to explain some things which strangers may think obscure. Only I beg, that if you suffer the worthy clergyman, your neighbour, to see any of these letters, you will be so obliging as to explain those articles which on the first reading, he may not understand, and that you will answer for me, those objections he may think proper to propose.

I am Sir,

Yours, &c.

LETTER XIV.

1774. 1776.

S I R,

IF you imagine, from the close of my last letter, that my former fears were entirely removed, you are under a mistake; for the appearance of peace among us, was but of short duration.

tion. I had already, offended some of my friends, by paying a due regard for the character of Mr. Anderson, their former pastor, and by attempting to bring about a closer union with those ministers of our own denomination, that had a just respect for the memory of that good old man. Our divided opinions on these affairs, and on some other matters which came before us, were not always stated, on either side, in a becoming temper, and this imprudence produced its own effects; which at last, issued in the painful separation, I purpose to give you some account of in this letter.

It would answer no good purpose, to relate minutely, all that I yet remember of our unhappy altercations. The ground of our dispute was frequently changed, contracted, or enlarged, just as the report of the day, or the temper of the evening, prevailed; and this, Sir, in my opinion, is the real state of ten thousand disputations. At length, wearied with vexatious debates, of which there seemed to be no end, I ventured to preach a sermon from these words: “And Abraham said
“unto Lot, Let there be no strife I pray thee, be-
“tween my herdmen and thy herdmen, for we
“are brethren. Is not the whole land before
“thee? Seperate thyself, I pray thee, from me.

“If

“ If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will
“ go to the right; or, if thou depart to the
“ right hand, then I will go to the left.”
“ Gen. xiii. 8, 9.

Having, by the aid of the context, explained these words, to the best of my ability, I observed, that strife among Christians, should, if possible, be avoided; that when it cannot, local separation is more eligible than meeting together in a state of contention; and that, in certain cases, he who proposes such a separation, on equitable terms, is to be commended. This discourse was better taken than I expected, and it brought forward the hope of a peaceable separation. But this business was long delayed. At least, I thought it long, under all the unpleasant disputes I had then to manage, and under all the censures, threatnings, and anxieties, I had then to endure.

I remember, Sir, that one evening, going aside to meditate on some words I had selected for my text, instead of being able to carry on any regular train of thought, I felt my mind greatly oppressed, and under that oppression, fell fast asleep, and continued in that state, till a messenger
awoke

awoke me, and reminded me of my present engagement. I wondered how I could sleep in such affliction; but I have since found, that sorrow and slumber, are not always at such variance as some are apt to suppose.

In the following summer, 1776, a friend who had compassion upon me in my affliction, and to whom I was indebted for many favors, proposed a journey into Derbyshire, to give me a little respite under my incessant fatigues; another obliging friend fell in with this proposal, and we made, with my wife and son, the tour of the peaks; but the whole of this journey was more or less saddened by the thoughts of my speedy return to Town, again to meet the troubles of my former station. In this excursion, I often felt my want of resignation to God, and frequently prayed to obtain that blessing. I here send you a few lines on that subject that were then useful to me, and which to this day, I often recollect, and repeat.

“ The SOVEREIGN FATHER, good and kind,
Wants but to have his child resign'd;
Wants but thy yielded heart——no more,
With his rich gifts of grace to store.

He to the soul no anguish brings,
From thine own stubborn will it springs;
THAT foe but crucify, thy bane,
Nought shalt thou know of frowns, nor pain."

LUTHER'S HYMN, STANZA III.

Nor were the following lines less acceptable to me, nor will they soon be forgotten.

"With peaceful steps thy race of duty run,
God nothing does, nor suffers to be done,
But thou wouldst do thyself; couldst thou but see
The end of all events as well as he"

BYROM'S POEMS.

On my return to Town, the time drew near when our disputes at Grafton Street were to cease; for, on the 29th of October 1776, our long talked of separation actually took place. The party who went off, made a third part of the church; and they were allowed, and paid, the sum of three hundred pounds by the two thirds that remained with me, on condition that no part of that money, should ever be applied to any other purpose than to carry on a separate state of public worship in London. These terms were readily assented to by them that left us, and they gave us a written assurance that condition should be

be regarded. This article was soon settled, under a persuasion, that they were likely to become a permanent body of people, whatever might be our lot who remained at Grafton Street. Of that, unpleasant predictions were thrown out, and for our future welfare many fears were then too visible to be concealed. But, by the grace of God, this separation did us no harm; nay, it was to our advantage. For though we parted with some respectable friends, we were separated from others, we could not wish to keep, and were left in a much better state amongst ourselves, than if they had remained with us.

As to what remains of this unpleasing story, it is well known, that they who separated from Grafton Street, were soon divided amongst themselves, and unable to keep together in the new meeting which they built in the Adelphi; and I believe, that not so much as three persons of the seventy three who went from us, now meet together statedly, in any place of worship, if I except the few who have long since, returned to us again in peace.

Such, Sir, is the present issue of that separation, I once dreaded, and afterwards desired;

con-

concerning which, before it took place, I had so much sorrow, and since, have had so much reason to rejoice.—The general state of our church in 1793, you will find in the Dedication of Seventeen Sermons which I published on the Character of Christ; nor is it now in a worse condition.

I am Sir,

Your's &c.

LETTER XV.

1776. 1777.

SIR,

AS soon as our discontented friends withdrew, a day of fasting and prayer was appointed, and kept; on which, I preached from these words: “He putteth his mouth in the dust, if so be there
“may be hope.” Lam. iii. 29. And on the following

lowing Lord's-day, this was my text, "The
" Lord our God be with us, as he was with our
" fathers : let him not leave us, nor forsake us."
1 Kings viii. 57.

Our next business was, to make choice of two new Deacons, and to one of them, Mr. John Beale, in Oxford Street, I have been very much indebted for the peace and comfort I have since enjoyed where I then was ; and, I owe much to his fidelity, care, and prudence, in my present situation. Were I to say, how much I am indebted to many of my friends in office, and to others, as private members, both male and female, my narrative would be much enlarged ; and even now, by throwing together what I had to say concerning our separation, it is interrupted. You must permit me, therefore, to go back, in order to take some notice of those pamphlets which I published previous to that event.

In the year 1775, I published the Christian's peculiar conflict, an Essay on Galatians v. 17. I had preached from that text at Sheepshead, and afterwards, at Kettering, Northampton, and London, with some acceptance ; and in each of these places, I was requested to print the sub-

stance of that discourse; and had it been printed, just as it was delivered, either in the country, or in Town, it would have appeared to greater advantage than in its present form. The Essay, however, with all its defects, was well received by many serious, and intelligent Christians; and a new edition of it has often been requested.

In this year, I also published a paper, called the Monitor. At that time, many unpleasant things were said on the American war, by a considerable number of my acquaintance, who talked as little to my satisfaction on other political subjects. I wished to convince them, that their language was intemperate, and to prove, that under the appearance of being advocates for liberty, they were in danger of pleading for that kind of licentiousness, that was very inconsistent with their profession of the Christian religion.

Had that paper met with civil treatment, I should have have published an octavo volume under the same title. But the first number of the Monitor, met with so unfavourable reception, and brought

brought upon me so many vexatious resentments, that I had no inducement to publish a second.

In this paper, called the Monitor, I attempted to shew, that rebellion first commenced in heaven ; that by the suggestions of a ruined rebel, our adversary, it gained admittance into Paradise ; and that since the fall of our first parents, the rebellious in all ages, in all conditions of life, have always had an illicit love for dominion ; so that, from the first generation to the present, were they to meet together in one body, they might say to each other, Walked we not in the same spirit ? Walked we not in the same steps ?

As publishing the Monitor drew down many censures upon me, and was the occasion of many false reports, at first, I was inclined to publish a sermon that I had preached from these words : “ Being defamed we intreat.” 1 Cor. iv. 13. But a friend whom I consulted, thought my opponents should rather be laughed at, than opposed as formidable assailants. I therefore only printed a few lines in verse, with this odd title : NO MATTER WHAT. A TALE. Nothing personal was indulged in those verses. They only contain the progress of a false report, passing

from RUMOUR to ENVY, MEANWELL, THOUGHTLESS, and FALSHOOD, in a manner too common to excite surprize, and in a temper sufficiently criminal to deserve reproof.

In the year 1776, I published Familiar Dialogues between Americus and Britannicus. This pamphlet in manuscript, met with the approbation of some of my friends; and one of them printed it, at his own expence. But when these Dialogues were published, they were unmercifully condemned. In vain, I attempted to explain in them some things that had given offence in the Monitor; and daring, in this performance, to censure some things advanced by Dr. Price, his partizans were exasperated at my supposed temerity. In short, so much was said against this publication, that they who seemed to approve of the Dialogues before they were printed, laughed at me, when they saw they were not likely to succeed. Every writer has such friends; but all that publish have not sufficient fortitude to treat them according to their desert.

In what manner these Dialogues were received by some who had no acquaintance with the author, I forbear to mention; but I will venture
to

to say, unpopular as they were, and are, they contain those arguments for rational, and peaceful subjection, to the civil powers of this country, that cannot be brought into deserved contempt. The imperfections of that performance, I see, and lament; but of my leading design, and of the manner in which it is there, in general, conducted, I am not ashamed.

Some of my friends, (for I have had friends of various complexions,) affected to wonder, that I, who had so much trouble and sorrow at Grafton Street, should meddle, as they pleased to call it, with political subjects. This, Sir, is the way of some gentlemen in Town, and I suppose it is so with some in the country. They can meet together, form associations, and corresponding societies, to propagate indecent, and unfounded reports of the powers that are, and aggravate, with pleasure, the inadvertence of our rulers, whatever may be the condition of their own affairs; whereas, if others attempt to make the best of that which is, by pleading for order, and legitimate subordination, these gentlemen are sure to censure their proceedings, and to speak of them in very harsh and disrespectful terms.

In November 1776, just after the separation, I published an Essay, which I had written before it had taken place, on the End and Evidence of Adoption. My design in writing this Essay, which is founded on Rom. viii. 14, was chiefly to guard serious people against arguing, as some of them are disposed to argue, when they speak of their own experience; and this I have done, by shewing, that if the end of adoption is not regarded, the evidence of that favor cannot be enjoyed. This Essay was reviewed by the Rev. Mr. Toplady, with some reflections upon it that might have been spared, and his attack, produced an answer with this title: The Review of the End and Evidence of Adoption Reviewed.

But, Sir, were these papers now to be republished, they would be carefully corrected, and considerably abridged. Yet while I say this, I am obliged to acknowledge, that it is more easy to promise such amendments than to fulfil the promise. For when I published the Christian's Conflict, of the six preceding publications, I said, "The Author now considers them, as written at a time, when it was his duty to have learned; his vanity to publish." This confession was made with great sincerity, and on purpose to guard

guard me against sending out in future, immature productions; but it had not the wished for effect. It is no uncommon thing to suppose, that desire and ability are inseparably connected; and I fear, that more than once, I have been tinctured with that delusion. This, however, is certain, that since that period, I have published some papers that are not better written than my former pamphlets.

I hope, Sir, this letter will convince you, that the separation, and the sorrows attending it, did not make me indolent, nor greatly unfit me for the duties of my station. How I was afterwards employed, you will hear in the course of this correspondence.

I am Sir,

Yours, &c.

LETTER

L E T T E R X V I .

1777. 1779.

S I R,

AS I cannot suppose, that an account of the journies I have taken, the verbal disputes in which I have engaged, and the public services at which I have assisted, since our separation, would be acceptable for you to receive, or proper for me to give, I shall in this, and in the following letters, chiefly take some notice of the additional papers I have published, and of those incidents, and events, which led me to be thus employed. It may not be amiss however, just to mention one thing before I proceed.

In the year 1776, a minister whom I much esteemed, talked to me of the importance of preachers being well acquainted with the Greek Testament, and declared, that he preferred his
own

own acquaintance with it, to all the commentators in his possession. This remark produced in my mind strong desires to increase what little knowledge I then had of Greek and Latin, and I resolved, if possible, not only to be better acquainted with those languages, but with the Hebrew text of the Old Testament.

Soon after I had formed this resolution, I was much encouraged to proceed by two books that fell into my hands, both of them written by I. T. Philips. The first, is called, An Essay towards a Rational Grammar; and the second, has this title: A Compendious way of teaching Antient and Modern Languages. The principles and examples contained in those books, were of great use to me; and I have ventured to recommend them, and a few more of equal value, to young men who had a thirst for knowledge, but, like myself, had not received a liberal education.

When I was in this track, I spared no cost; but purchased, without regret, more books in various languages, than I once imagined I should ever purchase; and indeed, had not my son of late, commenced a Bookseller, I should have been

been over stocked with such books as are perhaps, but rarely found in the library of a dissenting minister.

But after all, great are your advantages over me. You, who have had a regular education, have not been compelled to make use of my expedients, nor to blunder on, as I have done, without a living guide; and though I can now read five or six languages to my own edification, yet I cannot speak any language but my own. I find also, that if I venture on a foreign book, treating of any subject with which I have but little acquaintance, I am soon perplexed, and obliged to lay it aside.—The influence of things over words, the connection between the two, and the pre-eminence of sense to sound, deserve, in my opinion, greater attention than is commonly conceived.

In the year 1777, I published the Conquest of Canaan. This book was written for the amusement and instruction of youth, in a series of letters from a father to a son. Of this history, the Monthly Reviewers were pleased to say, that it was “ Calculated to convey, both to youth, “ and to other persons, instruction and assist- “ ance, as to this part of the Old Testament his-
“ tory,

“ tory, and also to improve their minds, and promote their virtue and piety. Such ends,” say they, “ the Author proposed by this publication, and such ends it is fitted to answer.” They add, “ Some objections to this part of the Sacred History are briefly considered, and several useful observations are made.”—Just let me observe, that this book, though replete with the same political sentiments which I had before advanced, sold off without contention, and has been recommended by several of my opponents.

In the same year, in the month of October, I published, in the Gospel Magazine, a Meditation on these words : “ Whom have I in heaven but thee.” Psal. xxiii. 25. This little piece I have corrected, and somewhat enlarged ; and in that state, I send it to you.—The short preface to the last edition of Doctor Owen’s Pamphlet, On the Mortification of Sin in Believers, was also written by me. A copy of that serious discourse shall be packed up with the rest of my papers.

In the year 1779, I printed a sermon with this title, The Counsel of Christ to Christians. The text, is Matthew v. 29. This Sermon contains a short account of them who do, and of

them who do not, regard our Saviour's counsel ; with some additional remarks on the wholesome, but difficult advice, imparted to us in that much neglected passage.

At the latter end of this year, I published my Thoughts on Public and Domestic Devotion. This pamphlet, was published in the form of a letter, addressed to the heads of Christian families. The subject of that letter, is founded on these words : “ And David returned to bless his “ house.” 1 Chron. xv. 43.

In the advertisment before this publication, I have said, “ As the following letter conveys to “ the heads of Christian Families, (particularly “ to those of the Baptist denomination in Lon- “ don,) the sentiments of more than one of their “ pastors, on several branches of Family Reli- “ gion, as united with the public worship of “ God, it is presumed, that the manner in which “ the plural number is used throughout that let- “ ter, will not be thought improper.”—The occasion of my writing on this subject, is thus stated in page 6, and 7.

“ Perhaps,

“ Perhaps, our opportunities of attending to
“ the public worship of God in London, are mul-
“ tiplied to excess; and this particularly seems
“ to be the case, on what we commonly call the
“ Lord’s day. They who carry it to that excess,
“ seem to forget, as some of us have done, that
“ the Christian Sabbath, as well as the Jewish,
“ was designed to be the sabbath of the Lord in
“ all our dwellings. For what idea can we have of
“ this sabbath in those dwellings, where the family
“ constantly attends public worship in the morn-
“ ing, afternoon, and evening of that day? How-
“ ever necessary, therefore, evening lectures may
“ be for those who live in irreligious families, or
“ who live in families, pretending only to be reli-
“ gious; in families which have no settled regard
“ for public worship themselves, and which but
“ seldom permit their domestics to enjoy it; how-
“ ever necessary evening lectures on the Lord’s
“ day may be for such persons (and in favor
“ of such, and of some others that we could
“ name, we think, under due regulations, they are
“ necessary :) yet we hope to be forgiven, if we
“ say, that they are not likely to be productive
“ of much good to those who have properly at-
“ tended to the former opportunities of that day,
“ as they ought, and who have those personal

“ and relative duties to discharge at home, which
“ no pretence of regard for public worship should
“ set aside.”

Such, Sir, were my sentiments in 1779, on evening lectures in London; and such are still my sentiments. That I have assisted at some of these services, since I first published the thoughts I have now quoted, is by no means inconsistent with any thing that I have said on that subject. Those lectures should not be laid aside; but I still think, that many attend them, greatly to the neglect both of family, and of personal religion.

This letter, on *Public and Domestic Devotion*, was thus noticed in the *Monthly Review*:

“ The title of this small performance
“ sufficiently expresseth its nature and design.
“ The original idea of it appears to have
“ been derived from a passage in the Old
“ Testament, in which the public and do-
“ mestic piety of David is recorded. When
“ the good king of Israel had borne a part in the
“ solemnities which attended the establishment
“ of the ark in 'Zion, he returned, it is said,
“ to bless his house.”

“ Mr.

“ Mr. Martin makes a very pious use of this
“ circumstance, and inculcates on Christians,
“ the importance and utility of a regular plan of
“ domestic devotion, particularly on the evening
“ of the Lord’s day”.—They add, what is more
in my favor, than it would be proper for me to
repeat.

I am, Sir,

Yours, &c.

LETTER XVII.

1780. 1787.

SIR,

IN the year 1780, there were, as you must have heard, very alarming riots in London. When they broke out into acts of violence, I was on a journey, and received the first report of those tumultuous

multuous proceedings at Nottingham. But before I left town, I was apprehensive, that something of a mischievous nature was approaching. What led me into such a thought was, the extravagant behaviour of Lord George Gordon. His lordship, for so he was commonly called, frequently heard me preach at Grafton Street, and he seemed anxious to procure my good opinion of many of his intemperate proceedings. One week day evening, after hearing a sermon, he pressed me to go with him to a tavern; saying, he had something important to impart to me alone.

I complied with his lordship's request, and heard a long account of the intended meeting in St. George's Fields, and strange things of other associations, and of correspondent societies in this country, and in Scotland. I repelled his lordship's notions, with a freedom that always gives me pleasure to recollect; but this did not prevent his putting a pamphlet, wet from the press, into my hands, very earnestly intreating to have my opinion upon it. It seemed to be his business that evening, to return flattery for rebuke, and to assure me, that if I would but take an active part, in what he was pleased to call, The Protestant Association, I should have a superior

perior station in that numerous assembly: when he found me invincible to that sort of adulation, he waited on me to my own house, then in Margaret Street, Cavendish Square, and left with me the pamphlet I have mentioned; intreated I would read it, and made me promise to give him my sincere opinion of its contents, in writing, the next morning.

This pamphlet I read, and was much displeased with several things, oddly huddled together in that inflammatory performance. I wrote therefore a very short letter to his lordship, which, as I recollect, ended thus: “I beg leave my lord, to
“inform you, that my first concern, on all these
“subjects is, to overcome evil with good; my second, not to be overcome of evil, and my
“final resolution is, not to do evil that good may
“come.” When I heard in the country, that both his lordship, and his papers were seized, I thought it possible, that my letter might be seized among the rest; but I had nothing to fear from its contents.

On my return to Town, I found it in a state of confusion. Some of my friends were alarmed for me, as my house, in Margaret Street, was

thought to be in danger from the mob. I was not terrified at those reports, believing, it was better, if the will of God was so, that I should suffer for well doing, than for evil doing; and in this belief, I preached my next sermon at Grafton Street, from 1 Pet. iii. 17.

In the year 1781, I preached a sermon at Salter's Hall, before the Correspondent Board in London, of the Society in Scotland, for propagating Christian Knowledge in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, and for spreading the gospel among the Indians in America. The title of this sermon is Christian Benevolence. The words of the text are, "And have not charity, I am nothing." 1 Cor. xiii. 2. This sermon was published at the request of the Society, and for their use.

In the following year, 1782, on the day of the public fast, I preached from these words: "What mean ye by this service?" Exod. xii. 26. I am sorry to inform you, that the young gentleman, (of whom you have, in a former correspondence, had my opinion, and who was very desirous of seeing this sermon in print,) has, some time since, publicly renounced those political principles

ples which he once approved, and for which his father had a great regard. As you are in possession of his book on the French Revolution, you may, from this sermon, observe his change of sentiment, and temper, and will, I suppose, think it inglorious.

As I still met with many censures for what I had written, and said, on political subjects, (for that phrase, when reproach is designed, is widely extended,) I resolved to publish some Queries and Remarks on Human Liberty, which I fondly imagined would be better received than what I had written before on the same subject. In this I was much deceived; nor can I now affect to wonder at it. For as I had not revoked any of my former sentiments, nor improved my stile, it was silly to imagine, that my opponents would be less severe on those Queries and Remarks, which I published in 1783, than they had been on any of my preceding pamphlets. I well remember reading most of these Queries and Remarks to the young gentleman alluded to in the last article; and at that time, my leading sentiments met with his applause. But he has since that period been a traveller, and an author, and some of his friends fear, he has left off to be wise and to do good. —

In the following year 1784, I lost a valuable friend by the death of Mrs. Sturgis ; the wife of one of the deacons of our church. Her funeral sermon was printed, at the request of her surviving husband, and in consideration of his many, and long continued acts of kindness to me, it was dedicated to him in such language as gratitude supplied.

Hitherto, I had not published any thing on baptism ; and it was very seldom, except when I baptized, that I introduced that subject in my stated sermons. But in the year 1786, at the request of a friend, I wrote nine letters on this controverted subject to the Rev. Mr. Horsey, pastor of an independent church at Northampton. This gentleman came from Northampton to London, to baptize a child of the Rev. Mr. Bennett's ; and the sermon which Mr. Horsey preached on this occasion, was printed, and called, " A Defence of Infant Baptism." This sermon was said to be unanswerable. Yet as some reply was expected, I was desired to engage in that service, and, on performing this task, I was loudly threatened by the party opposed. But if any reply has been yet made to my nine letters, I can only say, it has not fallen into my hands.

About

About this time, a very immoral old man, was much resorted to by many religious people in London. With this deceiver, of whom I had heard strange tales, I met at a house in Jermyn Street, near St. James's Square, and soon afterwards, 1787, I published a few pages concerning the feats of this old man, with this title: *Imposture Detected: or, Thoughts on a pretended Prophet, and on the prevalence of his impositions.* This performance, though much censured, was, I believe, of some service. But of the gross enthusiasm of some people, there is no end. Ever eager to bow down to the calf which they themselves have exalted, should THAT be run down to day, ANOTHER, as stupid, and as spotted, would be set up, and proclaimed, to-morrow. In this little piece, several suspicious people, that I have met with in London, are mentioned and exposed. If you think, I have been too severe on these vagrants, I can only say, that whatever evil is carried on by any man, under the pretence of his being more wise or pious than other people, awakes my indignation. When infirmities are acknowledged, all my resentments subside; but they who demand money, and expect applause, for senseless, and shameful proceedings, I cannot endure. I have often thought, Sir, of

the words of our Lord to the angel of the church at Ephesus. “ I know thy works, and thy labors, “ and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear “ them which are evil : and thou hast tried them “ which say they are apostles, and are not, and “ and hast found them liars : Rev. ii. 2. Your thoughts on this Christian intolerance would be considered a favor.

I am Sir,

Your's &c.

LETTER XVIII.

1788. 1791.

SIR,

I MUST now turn from impostors to men of moral worth ; for with such was I next engaged, in a controversy of an unpleasant kind. In the year 1787, I was informed, that several ministers of

of my acquaintance, were determined to propagate more Arminian tenets than they were once inclined to preach. Among these respectable ministers, the Rev. Mr. Andrew Fuller, of Kettering, was much applauded for a Treatise which he published with this title: The Gospel of Christ worthy of all Acceptation; or the obligations of Men, fully to Credit, and cordially to approve, whatever God makes known. This performance, induced me to write my thoughts on the Duty of Man, relative to faith in Jesus Christ.

The first part of this work, made its appearance in 1788. It contains my remarks on Mr. Fuller's leading propositions, considered as obscure, inconsistent, and erroneous. To this part, is added an Appendix, On Spiritual Life. The second part, was published 1791; in which, different views of the duty of man are stated and defended: and in this second part, as Mr. Fuller had already published five angry letters against me, those letters are answered, with as much civility as he had reason to expect. The third part of my Treatise on the Duty of Man, was also published

published in 1791; and in this part, the supposed advantages of Mr. Fuller's leading propositions are disputed.

The plan of my performance, does not now please me; nor is the temper of it, in some places, to be vindicated; but I still think, I have said much in that Treatise, that cannot be refuted; and I believe, that those sentiments, however unpopular, are by no means, unimportant.

While I was, thus engaged with Mr. Fuller, whom, after all, I sincerely respect, I found leisure to publish several other papers; and of them, I shall take some notice in this letter.

On the day of thanksgiving for His Majesty's Recovery, April 23, 1789, I preached a sermon from these words: "Rejoice with them that do rejoice." Rom. xii. 15. This sermon I printed; and I hope, it contains those thoughts on the propriety of rejoicing with them that are joyful, of the manner in which that duty should be performed, and of the measure by which our joy should be regulated, that you will not disapprove.

About

About this time, I picked up a little book which I read with great pleasure, and resolved to translate it for the edification of my friends. It was an Essay on Providence, written by M. Louis Marolles. In 1790, I published my translation of this Essay, with an abridgment of Mr. Jaquelot's History of the Sufferings and Martyrdom of that good and great man.

In the Preface to the original Essay, it is said,
“ We must not look into this Essay, for subtle
“ and brilliant thoughts, or for a stile entirely
“ correct. Our Author never valued himself on
“ such acquisitions. Besides, he lived at a time
“ when the French language was not brought to
“ its present perfection. But that which chiefly
“ commends this little piece is, the solidity of
“ the reflections, the natural manner in which
“ they are introduced, and the plenitude of unc-
“ tion with which the subject is treated. What
“ is here said of the doctrine of providence, is
“ expressed in a manner easy to be understood
“ by persons of common capacity.”

It is difficult to say, when this Essay was written; but it appears to have been finished, before the great persecution in France, in the year 1685. -3H

and prior to the revocation of the Edict of Nantz. “It is highly probable,” says the Author of the original preface to this Essay, “that this illustrious martyr, began to write it, when he saw the approaching desolation of our churches.” And, he adds, “We may believe, he foresaw the condition to which they would be reduced; and that he prepared himself for that event, by these holy meditations.”——May I take the liberty to add, that should we live to feel what the Protestants in France then felt, this Essay will be better known, and more esteemed, than it yet is in this country?

In December 1789, the general body of Dissenting ministers in London, met at their Library, in Red Cross Street, to consider of the measures proper to be adopted to express their concurrence with their brethren in the Country, in their resolutions, occasioned by their application to Parliament, for the repeal of the Corporation and Test Act.

Having been many years a member of this Society, I took it for granted, that I had a right to deliver my opinion freely, in the debate which
this

this business produced: but I was not permitted. I therefore thought it my duty to publish my intended speech; and this publication in 1790, procured me more praise and blame, than any thing I had printed. The addition now made to my real friends, or to them who have shewed themselves friendly to me, was not foreseen; but the increase of them who rose up against me, was expected. What sort of people they were. an anonymous pamphlet, published by one of them, will give you sufficient information. The title of it is, A Letter to the Reverend John Martin. Occasioned by his Intended Speech, on the Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. By no Reverend Dissenter. If, Sir, the Author of this Letter wished to have it known that HE is no REVEREND Dissenter, he has certainly obtained his end; and whether those ministers who assisted him to bring forward this mean performance, are, in reality, more REVEREND than himself, may be disputed.

In the same year, 1790, it so happened, that Animal Magnetism became the favorite study of the venal and the vain. I, therefore, was inclined to inquire into the secrets of this pretended

science; and afterwards, ventured to detect some of those enterprizing adepts who taught it, by publishing a Letter to a Gentleman in the Country on their hollow proceedings. Several anonymous papers, both in verse, and in prose, were handed about against me, for attempting to suppress a gainful employment; but these papers have long since, been thrown into inglorious situations; except such of them as may yet be found in the cabinets of the curious. Here, Magnetism has had its day. What conundrum is next to be dignified with the name of science, by which the idle may be enriched, and the silly amused, time will too soon discover.

In the year 1791, I published a sermon on Christian Prudence, as exemplified in the character of St. Paul. The text is, “I am made all things
“to all men, that I might, by all means, save
“some.” 1 Cor. ix. 22. In this sermon, the prudence of the apostle, in the manner in which he accommodated himself to the temper, and passions of those whom he instructed, and in the manner he argued with those with whom he disputed, is at some length considered, and recommended to
the

the reader's notice. But zealots have no zeal for prudence; and they who are fraught with Christian prudence, stand in no need of my remarks.

In the same year, 1791, I published a Letter to a young Gentleman in Prison; signed EUBULUS. This Letter first was written in verse; and when I afterwards attempted to throw the substance of it into prose, I soon found, that it retained too much of its original cast, and that it was not likely to please them who are not fond of numerous composition. But growing weary of my task, and having reason to believe, that young people are not apt to be displeased with such a stile, I let it pass. To say truth, I was then, as often before, trying, by a variety of experiments, to form a stile that would please myself; and though I have not yet succeeded, I have certainly made some discoveries, that otherwise I might not have attained.

At the latter end of this year, 1791, I ventured to published, A Review of some things pertaining to Civil Government. This pamphlet contains some remarks not unworthy your notice, as well as some that might have been spared. I

know not, that it has been of any use to my opponents; for most of those gentlemen are of opinion, that the Bible is a book from which we are not NOW to learn how to behave to the powers that ARE: a notion, which if pursued to its final consequences, is like enough to produce what some philosophers have very much at heart.

You will see, Sir, by the publications I have mentioned in this letter, that while engaged in controversy with Mr. Fuller, he did by no means, engross the whole of my attention; and, I again assure you, that for him, I continue to have real respect.

I am Sir,

Yours, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XIX.

1793.

S I R,

FROM the year 1791, to the year 1793, I do not recollect, that I published any thing; but in this year, I sent to the press two small manuscripts, and one of a considerable size. Of these, in the order they were published, I shall say some thing in this letter.

The first pamphlet in 1793, was occasioned by the murder of Louis XVI. King of France. But the best thing contained in that performance, (which was written without much reflection, and published in an unguarded moment,) will be found in the note that recommends to the readers notice Mr. Archdeacon Paley's Reasons for Contentment. It is addressed to the laboring

ing

ing part of the British public; and well deserves to be read by the idle part of that community.

My second publication, in 1793, was seventeen sermons, on the Character of Christ. This Sir, is the largest book that I have printed; and, in my own opinion, the best. The motives which induced me to publish these sermons are thus stated.

“ It hath for some time, been my wish to be
“ thus employed, to refresh my own mind with
“ facts of the greatest importance; and, of late,
“ this wish has been more ardent, from reflec-
“ tions on some of my former publications, by
“ which I have been too much diverted from
“ such facts, in a manner I need not here ex-
“ plain. It may be sufficient to say, that he who
“ writes for the press,” (an improper word, for
“ I never wrote for the press in my life, in
“ the common sense of that expression,) “ is
“ not always at full liberty, to write on what is
“ most agreeable to his own taste. His atten-
“ tion is often turned to things not the most pleas-
“ ing to himself, either as an author, or as a
“ man. Our works, whether they are wise, or
“ foolish, are in the hands of God. However,
“ God

“ God hath not yet permitted me, at any time, to
 “ publish a single page, which I suspected to
 “ be erroneous, or thought to be unfair, when
 “ it went from my pen. But who is so hap-
 “ py, always to write in such a maner, as, on
 “ subsequent reflection, he thoroughly ap-
 “ proves?”

These seventeen sermons, Sir, are, On the Prophecies, Pre-existence, Incarnation, Infancy, and Youth : On the Baptism, Temptations, Miracles, and preaching of Christ ; On his calling others to preach ; On the sententious sayings of Christ ; On his prophetic Declarations ; On his Sufferings, Resurrection, Ascension, Intercession, and second Coming ; and, On HIS being the Sum of the Sacred Scriptures.—To the eighth of these sermons, is added a Postscript ; and, to the thirteenth, and fourteenth, are subjoined an Appendix. After the last of them, you will find, translations from several French authors on some important subjects.

This volume of sermons, has been reviewed by a gentleman who is pleased to say, “ Mr. Martin, evidently thinks for himself. His discourses, appear to be the result of accurate

“ reading”

“ reading, and application ; and discover, no less
“ the good understanding of the writer, than the
“ sincerity of his affection to his adorable Mas-
“ ter. They are crowded with sentiment ; and,
“ if the weight of a book were to be judged,
“ rather from the number of ideas which it con-
“ tains, than from the number of its words or
“ pages, this octavo volume, (to allude to Mr.
“ Addison’s humorous remark,) would outweigh
“ many a modern quarto, or folio.”

How much, Sir, this learned gentleman has thrown into the opposite scale, by way of balance I suppose, to such unsolicited praise, you may see, if you choose to read the Evangelical Magazine for February 1795. But after his indulging that kind of general censure, which Reviewers are always able to produce, he in the plural number, thus concludes : “ Notwith-
“ standing the freedom of our remarks, we have
“ read these sermons with pleasure. We consider
“ them as truly evangelical ; and worthy the
“ attention of the more intelligent part of our
“ readers.”—I wish, Sir, as much as I can, to avail myself of the complaints exhibited against me in that magazine ; because they are evidently made with a view to my advantage ; but had those
complaints

complaints been particular, and supported by proper specimens of my faults, that would have been of greater use to me than loose rebuke. If however, the worthy authors of that charitable miscellany, should ever peruse any sermons of mine, subsequent to the date of these letters, I hope they will allow, that I have endeavoured to make the best of their good advice.

The third article which I published in 1793, was four letters to Henry Keene, Esquire, (since alas ! deceased,) occasioned by the Case of a Dissenting Minister, then at Harlow, in Essex. The mischief of being credulous, on hearing unfounded, or highly aggravated reports, has been immense ; and it is too evident, that some ministers are as much addicted to that folly, as other people ; although Paul himself, has said, “ Against
“ an Elder, receive not an accusation, but before
“ two, or three witnesses.” 1 Tim. v. 19.—“ By
“ the Mosaic law, a private person might be
“ cited, though not condemned, on the testimony
“ of one person. But St. Paul forbids an elder
“ to be convicted on such evidence ; his reputation being of more importance than that of
“ others.”—On this subject, I shall only add, that my letters to Mr. Keene, were written on
such

such motives, and on such information that I cannot lament they were sent to that gentleman; but whether any of them were of much service to the accused, or to any of his accusers, they are best able to say.

And now, Sir, having gone through the year 1793, give me leave to say, I have for some time been weary of this undertaking; insomuch, that from several reports in circulation, I have already thought it proper to abridge my original plan. It is high time; for some, I am told, seem shocked at my imprudence.

These good people, can often talk of their OWN experience among themselves, and can as often, introduce their minute affairs before them who are obliged to listen to the thrice told tale. They can suffer some people gladly, to be as loquacious as they please, on very trifling subjects; but me, they would not permit, could they prevent it, to write to you any of these letters. This Sir, is one consequence of being too much esteemed; for these indulgent friends are so kind, as almost to promise, that if I will drop my design, they will publish an account of my life, and review, at their leisure, all that I have published;

lished ; or hire somebody to do it for them ; but, I am so perverse, as not to accept of their generous proposals.

Some of them have supposed, that in my letters to you, I shall often speak of myself, and of others imprudently. In vain, I remind them, that most of the inspired writers published, in their life time, some account of themselves, and of their infirmities. They reply, I am not inspired. But surely, inspiration did not lead inspired writers to publish what was improper. In vain, I inform them, that St. Augustine, Bishop Hall, John Bunyan, the Rev. Mr. Newton, and many more, they hold in high esteem, have gone before me in this slippery path ; for they are deaf when I attempt to remove objections. In vain, have I pleaded the authority of Doctor Johnson, as quoted in my first letter : for I have, it seems, misunderstood him ; at least, they will have it, that he never intended a Dissenting Minister should avail himself of his authority.

Now, Sir, in consequence of these well-timed oppositions, I own, I am disposed to finish my narrative

rative as soon as I can. Yet as my mother used to say of a good man,

“ That though he promis’d to his loss,

“ He made his promise good.”

I shall keep my word with you, and proceed, in my next letter, to give you some account of those papers that have not yet been noticed.

I am, Sir,

Yours, &c.

LETTER XX.

1794. 1796.

S I R,

IN June 1793, I opened a new Meeting-House, near Blandford Street, Manchester Square. It was built at a venture, by Mr. Thomas Cadby, a member

member of our Church, and erected by him, for the convenience of several families in communion with us, and in hope, of making the gospel better known in that improving situation; where, of late, the streets are numerous, and places of worship are but few. As every thing in this business, was conducted with the consent of the church of which I was the pastor, I was invited to preach the first sermon in that new Chapel. The text was, Matthew vi. 10. This sermon I printed in 1794, and sometime afterwards, the members that went peaceably from us to Blandford Street, were, with some others, settled in Church fellowship. The Rev. Doctor Jenkins their minister, the Rev. Mr. Booth, and myself, assisted at that service.

In the same year, 1794, I published an Essay on Future Misery. In this Essay I have taken some notice of those erroneous opinions which of late have been revived, and propagated, on that awful subject; and have shewn, that the scriptures must be considered as the only source of sound information of the future condition of sinful men. I have also, added such inferences, as the nature of this alarming subject seemed to require.

At the latter end of this year, I published an Essay on the Liberty of Man; in which, I flatter myself, those things are advanced on human liberty in general, and on liberty of thought, of speech, of the press, and of human action, in particular, that you will not disapprove. At the end of this Essay, are some curious extracts from Milton's Paradise Lost. That great poet was a strange man. Who would imagine, that the motto of this Essay, taken from his works, could be found in a Sonnet, written on his Te-trachordon, and applied to the subject of divorce?

In the year 1795, I published a Sermon, On the sinfulness of Sin, from Rom. vii. 13. in which some of the many, and great advantages, of our having correct thoughts of the sinfulness of sin, with a proper temper of mind, and becoming conduct, are brought forward, I hope, to answer some good purpose.—The Appendix to that sermon, contains some observations on Antinomians and Arminians, which I believe, are not very common.

In April 1795, I attended the funeral of my worthy friend, Mr. Thomas Sturgis, of South Audley Street, Grosvenor Square, who was for
many

many years, one of our Deacons. His funeral sermon, and the speech at his grave, I printed, at the request of his surviving widow. The title of this Sermon is, Primitive Christianity considered. The text, is Rom. xiv. 8. In this Sermon, I first give the sense of the words I had selected, then shew to whom those words may be applied, and how far they may be safely applied to Mr. Sturgis. In the Speech at the grave, I considered what might best of all reconcile us to our own departure, and added such remarks as the affecting situation suggested.

In the summer of this year, 1795, we removed from Grafton Street, Soho, to our new Chapel near Store Street, Bedford Square. On that occasion, I delivered a Discourse from these words, "And there they preached the gospel." Acts xiv. 7. In this sermon, afterwards printed at the request of the church, I have endeavored to shew, what the gospel is; what is said of the gospel in the sacred scriptures; what is there said of them that receive it, and of them also, that reject the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation. With this sermon, you will find a concise, and fair account, of the manner in which that

place of worship was erected, and by what means the expence of such a neat and substantial building, was discharged.

I have only to add, that in the month of July, 1796, I baptized several persons in our new Meeting, and that the discourse I then delivered to a crowded audience upon that occasion, was soon after printed with this title: A View of the Evidences of Believers Baptism.

You have now, Sir, a tolerably correct copy of all my printed papers; and when you have looked it over, you may read, at your leisure, any of them, just as you may be disposed to give yourself the trouble.

I am Sir,

Your's &c.

LETTER XXI.

1797.

SIR,

I AM told, that you intend to publish my letters. If that report is true, the opinion that some will form of them may be unpleasant; and though I am not inclined to court their applause, it is not my intention to give them just offence. You must permit me therefore, if I can, to soften their rising resentments. This however, I dare not do in my own name; but you may safely make an apology for me, as you can have nothing to fear, provided it should not succeed.

You may safely assure them, that my own judgment on what I have written to you, will not suffer me to be elated. Indeed, Sir, I am in no

great danger of long admiring any of my own works; for nothing that I do, when done, entirely meets with my approbation. My notion of excellence, vastly exceeds every thing I am able to perform: so that, in all my pursuits, I am some what like those gentlemen, who are delighted with the chace, and who, when it is ended, are more than half ashamed of their prey.

While I was writing these letters, I was kept from worse employment, and from company, that might perhaps, have been weary of my conversation. I was therefore, thankful for being so engaged. But now they are written, I glance at the copies of them in my possession with mortifying emotions. Probably, this is owing more to my ambition, than to my virtue; but, Sir, in the face of this fact, surely, I am rather an object of pity, than a man to be envied, or disdained: and the more so, since I am convinced, that were I to write these letters over again, (written more than three times over already,) as soon as I had looked on all that my hands had wrought, and on the labour I had laboured to do, I should still be discontented.

This

This, Sir, is my portion under the sun: nor do I quarrel with it. For, could I please myself as quickly, as much, and as long, with those things I attempt to perform, as some are said to do with their own productions, I should probably content myself with being as formal, as tedious, and as dull, as those gentlemen generally are.

Again; in your Preface, you might say, that whatever some people may think of my having written so much, on subjects so various, you believe, that I have done this, while I seldom preached less than four times a week, besides, frequently baptizing, and as often burying the dead; that I have done this, while my other private, and public avocations, have not been few. This, Sir, you might say, and infer, that it is no wonder, that a man so employed, and almost as often opposed, is not always equal to himself: but, on second thoughts, you had better not. It will answer no good end. For though it may prove at least, I have not been an idle man, idle people will not be pleased with that proof, and from the industrious, I have not, I hope, much to fear.

Once more; you might say, that if I had drawn up my narrative after the manner of Mr.

Bayle

Bayle, the French Biographer, or after some of his imitators, the notes would have been swelled to a vast amount; or that, if I had followed those writers in this country, who abound in idle, and impertinent digressions, I might have made a folio: whereas, alarmed at the censures of the judicious, or, rather at the thoughts of incurring their censure, I have only written one and twenty short letters, which may be had for eighteen pence. This you might say; but you had better forbear; since they who love to find fault, will be vexed if they should be disappointed.

Were not that the case, you might say, that the account which you have published of the Life and Writings of Mr. John Martin, contains many remarks on other persons, and on other things; but even that would be offensive to them who do not wish for such information.

You would be surprized, Sir, were I to send you a list of half the charges already exhibited against me. But I own, that I comfort myself in thinking, that what an author is most afraid of, I need not at present fear. Doctor Johnson
says,

says, “ There is nothing more dreadful to an
“ author than *neglect*;—compared with which,
“ reproach, hatred, and opposition, are names
“ of happiness: yet this worst, this meanest
“ fate, every one who dares to write has rea-
“ son to fear.” But since I have heard of the
talk, that is let loose upon me, I conclude,
I am not likely to be *neglected*.

The correction of these letters I must leave
to you. I have not patience to perform that
task. It is tiresome work for me to consider,
whether the pointing is regular, free, or stiff;
whether a word may not here and there be
misplaced, or mis-spelled; whether the quota-
tion marks are exact, and chapter and verse,
always properly produced; whether the stile
is sufficiently polished, and varied, and whether
every argument, in every place, is the very best
I could have used.

To be serious; our works, whether they are
wise or foolish, are in the hands of God. He
can pardon our imperfections, and prosper our
feeblest attempts to show forth his praise.
His blessing, is not pendent on human merit;
but

but is the efficient cause of all that is excellent in man. His providence is not under the control of any of his creatures; for they are, without exception, subject to his dominion. By the grace of God, I am what I am. When some men speak of themselves, they are, and must be vain; but when a sound believer speaks of himself, of himself he cannot glory. His soul makes her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof and be glad.

I am Sir,

Yours, &c.

Great Russel-Street, Bloomsbury.

March, 1797.

THE END.

Some account of the life and writings of John Martin

London 1797

Biogr. 740 lu

urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10064933-3